YOUTH CHURCHES – A CHURCH PLANTING AND EVANGELISM STRATEGY FOR THE FORMER GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

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To the Jugend Kirche Marzahn

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PREFACE

The focus of my ministry between the years 2000 and 2006 was church planting into the youth culture of the post-communistic and thoroughly atheistic environment in the eastern part of Berlin in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) or commonly known as East Germany. As can be imagined there are cultural, historical, political, social, spiritual, socio-economic and religious issues that are unique to this area. These are on top of the usual challenges facing church planters in the Western world in general at the dawn of the well-documented and much discussed major paradigm shift from modernism to post-modernism at the close of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, with its concomitant concerns of secularization, globalization, pluralism, relativism, increasing individualism and value fragmentation.

The question that consumed us as a church planting team during those years was how effective, biblical, visionary, multiplying and contextualized churches could be planted in this spiritually-dry geographical area and how this "unreached people group" could thus join the ranks of the multi-national, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic celebration around the throne of God described for us in the familiar Johannine vision of Revelation 7:9-10. Our hope and vision was that a saturation church-planting movement in eastern Berlin would be initiated so that each inhabitant would be given an adequate understanding of the Good News and the ability to respond to the personal invitation of Jesus Christ. Our particular emphasis was on the youth, for reasons which have brought about this work.

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Thanks also to personal friends such as David and Robert, my extended family and especially my parents who have always believed in me and supported me.

Last but not least, a big thank you is in order for my dear wife Kay and our three boys, Stephan, Yannick and Micah, for allowing her husband and their father to commit a big portion of his time to the completion of this project.

ABBREVIATIONS

DDR Deutsche Demokratische Republik or GDR

EKD Evangelische Kirche Deutschland or Evangelical Church in Germany

FeG Freie evangelische Gemeinde; a free church denomination

GCTS Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

GDR German Democratic Republic or DDR

HU Homogenous Unit

HUP Homogenous Unit Principle

MBS Martin Bucer Seminary

NIV New International Version

PCA Presbyterian Church in America

SED Sozialistiche Einheitspartei Deutschlands or Socialist Unity Party of

Germany

UK United Kingdom

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ABSTRACT

The current situation of the church in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) is marked by extensive Konfessionslosigkeit and a-religiosity. Traditional church planting methods are highly ineffective in reaching the thoroughly atheistic, secularized East German citizen.

Therefore, this research project investigates, explores and studies various youth church plants in the East German context and reflects biblically, theologically and missiologically on the youth church concept. The paradigm of critical contextualization provides a helpful framework for evaluation of culture and the youth church concept.

The conclusion maintains the defensibility of the youth church concept missiologically even though the premise of the concept, the homogenous unit principle, is theologically flawed. It calls for more youth churches to be planted in one of the most challenging areas globally and provides a model for a youth church in the East German context and a proposal for a leadership and church planting track for youth church planters.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Most East Germans have forgotten that they have forgotten God." This quote begins to explain the challenge of church planting in this region of Germany which, in certain areas, is up to eighty-eight percent atheistic. Several young people of a neighboring youth church plant in East Berlin did a short questionnaire in a local mall asking forty adults a simple question: "Do you believe in God?" Not even one responded in the affirmative. One man did say that he thought that it might be nice if a god did in fact exist, but we all knew that there is no such thing as a real deity.

"De-christianization – the worst result of the SED (Sozialistiche Einheitspartei Deutschlands or Socialist Unity Party of Germany) church politics." The SED tried to abolish many things: private property, market economy, inequality, democracy. Most of those returned. Only one thing did not – Christianity. The disappearance of religion is the biggest success of the SED." These are just two quotes from the thorough and well-

¹ Alexander Garth, a Lutheran pastor who has successfully planted a youth church in East Berlin and transitioned it into a multi-generational church, made this statement to the author in the interview for this project on February 16, 2007 in Berlin.

² Greeley and Jagodzinski. "Top 10 Countries with the Highest Proportion of Atheists – 1991," Adherents.com, http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_atheist.html (accessed April 11, 2007). Other sources indicate that nearly eighty percent are without a confession ("konfessionslos" or not a member of any church) in the former GDR, e.g. Detlef Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft: Zum Wandel der gesellschaftlichen Lage der evangelischen Kirche in der DDR*, (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln: Kohlhammer, 1994), 374.

³ Rainer Eppelmann, Martin-Michael Passauer, and Peter Maser, "Entchristianisierung – die schlimmste Folge der SED-Kirchenpolitik," *epd Dokumentation, Evangelischer Pressedienst*, Nr. 41/94, (4. Oktober 1994). This quote is the title of this volume of the periodical.

⁴ Wolfgang Büscher, "Kein Gott, nirgends," *Gemeinschaftswerk Evangelischer Publizistik*, (June 26, 1998), 1. A distinction should be made here between the actual belief in God (which was almost completely eradicated) and the structure or organization of the church in the GDR. The structure of the parish churches remained intact even during the GDR. After the wall came down, when everything about the GDR was being dismantled and this nation ceased to exist, the church structure remained. Some East Germans take great pride in the fact that the state church was the only institution that refused allegiance to the GDR regime and remained after the wall came down. Some point to this as a reason why East Germans put more trust in the state church today than in free churches and other religious groups.

documented research of the EKD⁵ (Evangelische Kirche Deutschland or Evangelical Church in Germany) in response to the dramatic political developments in Germany culminating in the fall of the Berlin wall on November 9, 1989 and the disastrous consequences for the church and the Christian faith at the hands of the communistic party with its ideological conviction of atheism. The church in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), popularly known as East Germany, has declined radically to become a church of insignificance; it has been transformed from the Volkskirche (people's church of the majority) to a minority church.⁶ It seems apparent that most East Germans still have absolutely no interest in anything religious and the task of planting a church in which people can celebrate Christ as Lord and King seems utopian.

Hence, the spiritual climate of many parts of East Germany⁷ is frosty; the people of this former nation apparently immune⁸ to the Gospel. How does the body of Christ need to respond to this depressing scenario? What strategies can be developed to re-Christianize the eastern regions of Germany?⁹

⁵ EKD, "EKD," EKD, http://www.ekd.de/english/3825.html (accessed September 15, 2007). "The Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) is the institutional form chosen by a community of 23 Lutheran, Reformed and United regional churches. German Protestant church structures are based on federal principles at all levels. Each local congregation is responsible for Christian life in its own area, while each regional church has its own special characteristics and retains its independence. Without in any way diminishing this autonomy, the EKD carries out joint tasks with which its members have entrusted it. The EKD has the following governing bodies, all organised and elected on democratic lines: the Synod, the Council and the Church Conference. They are responsible for fulfilling the EKD's tasks as laid down in the Constitution of the EKD."

⁶ The term used in German is Minderheitskirche or minority church as opposed to the Volkskirche (direct translation: people's church). Volkskirche is a term coined and shaped by Friedrich Schleiermacher and refers to the two larger denominations in Germany, Protestant and Catholic. It does not refer to the legal entity of church and its relationship to the state, but rather the relationship of the church to the people. In the past it has had a major influence on the life, faith, mentality and culture of the people of Germany.

⁷ One must distinguish between various regions in East Germany, for the church district in Saxony is the area that reveals the highest church attendance in the entire nation of Germany today. The strong pietistic traditions of yesteryear in this area still seem to have an influence to this day.

⁸ The people have been "immunized to the Gospel." This phrase was the assessment of several German pastors and priests who dedicated significant time to consider this resistance to the Gospel.

⁹ Some would argue that certain areas of the former GDR were never really Christianized in the first place. Hence we would be talking not about a re-Christianization but a Christianization.

The local church continues to be the chosen instrument of God for ministry on earth. Much maligned, criticized, persecuted and neglected it remains "the hope of the world," and "the greatest force on the face of the earth." And it is a well-established fact that church planting is the most effective means of evangelism and reaching the lost. Therefore, the planting and establishing of new churches in this region of the world must be a priority.

The sobering reality is, as confirmed by research and experience, that standard church planting in the former GDR amongst free churches since the fall of the wall is an exceedingly difficult and ineffective task. ¹² It is a lengthy and tedious process with rather discouraging results. ¹³ Therefore, bold, new, creative expressions of church should be conceived, developed and attempted to address the overwhelming spiritual dryness and indifference in this part of the world.

The most encouraging signs of church growth and development seem to have occurred in a few youth church plant ¹⁴ initiatives in this same geographic area. The "Junge Kirche Berlin" and the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" in East Berlin as well as the "KRAFTWERK – Dresden" in Saxony are three such projects. ¹⁵

¹⁰ Bill Hybels, "ThinkExist.com Quotations," http://thinkexist.com/quotation/the-local-church-is-the-hope-of-the-world-and-its/761846.html (accessed December 7, 2007).

¹¹ Rick Warren, "The Church: the greatest force on Earth," Rick Warren.com, http://www.rickwarren.com/ (accessed December 7, 2007).

¹² Sabine Schröder, *Konfessionslose erreichen! Gemeindegründungen von freikirchlichen Initiativen seit der Wende 1989 in Ostdeutschland.* (Göttingen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007). Her challenge is for church planters to take the hard work of cross-cultural thinking and inculturation much more seriously.

¹³ Anecdotal evidence in East Berlin supports Sabine Schröder's research. Some of this evidence will be considered at more depth throughout this work.

¹⁴ A youth church is an intentional approach of being and doing church within the youth-based subculture. The concept of youth churches has had a major impact primarily in the post-Christian context of England in the last two decades. It is a serious attempt at contextualizing the Christian faith and church into the culture and language of the youth generation and will be discussed in depth in section III of chapter 2.

¹⁵ Two other youth evangelistic projects were included in the case study research even though neither one ever intended to become a youth church. The "Arche" in Saxony is an evangelistic ministry into the youth culture out of which a church for the workers has evolved. The "Lindentalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" in Mecklenburg-Western-Pomerania is a church plant and started with a focus on ministry

Since the youth church concept is a relatively new innovation in church planting and is considered part of the fresh expressions of church and the emerging church movements world-wide there is still a lack of cohesion, understanding and comprehensive evaluation of this concept. Much theological reflection and practical experimentation is still necessary. This study is a contribution towards that end.

Thesis Statement

Therefore, this study explored the feasibility of planting youth churches as a church planting and evangelism strategy in the former GDR to contribute in completing the task of world evangelization in this geographical area. It is a plea for mission agencies which minister in this area of the world to consider seriously planting youth churches alongside of or in partnership with existing German free churches or denominations.

In order to understand the depth of the problem and the significance of the proposed solution, this thesis sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1. Why are the citizens of the former GDR resistant and immune to the Gospel, causing many church plants since the fall of the wall in 1989 to fail? What are some possible contextually-sensitive responses to the robust atheism and a-religiosity?
- 2. What is a youth church and what are the biblical/theological implications of the youth church concept?
- 3. What is church and how does it relate to culture, evangelism, missiology, contextualization or inculturation, church planting and leadership?
- 4. What is the relationship between ecclesiology, missiology and contextualization?

to young people but also never intended to become a youth church. Both of these initiatives were included in the case study research for the sake of comparison and to demonstrate the potential effectiveness of evangelistic youth ministry in the former GDR and to show the small number of actual youth churches being planted.

5. What does a visionary model for a youth church in East Germany look like and how can the youth church concept contribute to a nation-wide strategy for church planting (and evangelism) in the present and near future in the former GDR?¹⁶

These questions were explored through significant literature research covering numerous areas of life and mentality of the former GDR, such as its history, its sociological, psychological, ecclesiastical and political developments and their implications for the Christian religion and the church today. Qualitative research utilizing a multi-case approach of the few existing youth churches in the former GDR was completed. The ecclesiological and theological questions of the youth church concept were investigated by listening to various theologians and church planting practitioners and evaluating their thinking in light of the East German challenge. Finally, the establishment of a training track for youth church planters is recommended. (See Appendix A – "Leadership/Church Planting Track for Martin-Bucer Seminary").

Limitations of the Project

Firstly, this research project has in view the planting of youth churches within various free church denominations in the former GDR. ¹⁷ The Evangelical Church in Germany, ¹⁸ the ecclesiological outgrowth of the great German church reformer Martin

¹⁶ An interesting aside here is the fact that the East German government sought to influence the mind of the youth (it seems that most revolutionary movements in history have identified the youth as a major key to successful realization of their visions and dreams) towards their communistic ideals by providing organized children's and youth activities, often in direct competition to those of the church. For example, even though the humanistic and secular alternative to the church's confirmation, a secular coming of age ceremony practiced by German fourteen year olds, called *Jugendweihe* (youth consecration) was conceived and organized by the humanistic and a-religious groups in the middle part of nineteenth century Germany, the East German government pounced on this idea and developed this into a yearly national and cultural event of massive proportions. The influence of the church on the youth of this nation was thus systematically and strategically sidelined.

¹⁷ American and international teams could partner with existing evangelical denominations for the sake of planting churches and thus extending the Kingdom of God.

¹⁸ Adherents.com, "Religious Bodies of the World with at Least 1 Million Adherents," Adherents.com, http://www.adherents.com/adh_rb.html (accessed November 14, 2007). With its twenty-seven million members the EKD is the eighth largest religious body world-wide and the sixth largest

Luther, is still using the organizational structure of the parish system, which made church planting a non-issue historically. Their official view was that Germany was church-saturated and there was no need to start new ones. ¹⁹ In every community including the smallest villages, the church building still stands at the center of town, a silent testimony to the once relevant and influential Christian faith. However, many of these churches, especially in the former GDR, remain empty or are being used for other purposes. Sunday morning attendance numbers are sobering. The village church of Berlin-Marzahn²⁰ would be considered a mega-church by US standards when looking strictly at the membership numbers which stand at about 2,300. If you were to walk into their weekly Sunday morning services, however, you would be received by a yawning emptiness with only about thirty to fifty, mostly elderly, individuals in attendance. ²¹ Even in the West the wave of church members leaving the church has not abated for years prompting the chairman of the Lutheran bishop's conference Bishop Wolfgang Huber to describe and address the seven-way crisis of the Protestant church in his book *Kirche in der Zeitwende*. ²²

According to Huber there is a membership crisis, a financial crisis, a volunteer crisis, a

denomination within the Christian religion. Sadly, the size of the church is not equal to its impact on German society, culture, politics, values, etc. This gives abundant fodder to the missional church movement which is heavily criticizing Christendom-type churches and calling for radical steps in dealing with the present state of many main-line denominations in the Western world (See e.g. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003).

¹⁹ However, in January of 2007 the EKD held a conference entitled *Zukunftskongress* (congress of the future) in which the future of the German church was discussed, including the traditional parochial structure of churches which was deemed useful and reliable in covering several tasks. But with view to the missionary challenge, this structure needs development. In other words, there is a new openness to look at church planting as a viable option for church growth and to "enlarge" or "extend" some traditional ecclesiological language (e.g. Profilgemeinden, or churches with a certain and distinct profile, including youth churches).

²⁰ Detlef Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft: Zum Wandel der gesellschaftlichen Lage der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln: W.Kohlhammer Druckerei, 1994), 405. Marzahn is the far-eastern district of Berlin in which we planted the Marzahn youth church. According to Detlef Pollack, this district reveals the worst church membership statistics Germany-wide; only three to four percent of the population still belongs to any church.

²¹ Eighty-two percent of children (ages six to twelve) in formerly West Germany believe in God. Only twenty-seven percent of children in formerly East Germany believe in God.

²² Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche in der Zeitenwende* (Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1998), 223-234.

German re-unification crisis, a church organizational crisis, a crisis of the crisis management and the fundamental crisis of them all, a vision crisis. The term crisis is appropriate and a gradual and deliberate re-thinking of the meaning of ecclesiology is apparent. Considerable time, effort, and theological discussion is being invested and expended in trying to understand and adjust to the changing times.²³ But state-church inertia continues to be a problem and makes the task of church planting in the youth culture in the free-church denominations all the more pertinent and essential.²⁴

Secondly, the purview of this project is limited geographically to the former states of the GDR or East Germany. Even tough, as mentioned above, the present church situation in the West is approaching crisis levels, the focus of this work is on the East.

Thirdly, this is an exploratory work, envisioning the potential of this incipient global youth church movement for East Germany and thus emphasizing qualitative research due to the limited number of existing youth churches in this region at the present time. Great Britain seems to be in the vanguard of this movement, having developed and established various models of youth churches or youth congregations. ²⁵ In June 2001 over eight hundred current and prospective youth church planters gathered for a strategy meeting and Anglican church leaders in the highest echelons of leadership have addressed the issue of youth churches and ecclesiology. ²⁶ The positive effects of these creative and

²³ See the paper "Kirche der Freiheit" (church of freedom) presented at the Zukunftskongress der EKD (Congress of the future) in January 2007. Perspektivkommission des Rates der EKD, "Kirche der Freiheit," EKD, http://www.ekd.de/download/kirche-der-freiheit.pdf (accessed November 12, 2007).

²⁴ Ironically, one of the most significant and successful youth churches is being planted by Alexander Garth, a pastor of the Lutheran church. It was started with and for young people but is no longer a youth church. Alexander Garth's heart beats for the un-churched, atheistic East German no matter what age, but he used the youth church concept as an initial strategy to break open the hardened ground.

²⁵ Mark Lamport, "The Rise of Youth Churches," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 41, no.1 (2005): 14. According to British leaders there is a distinction between youth churches and youth congregations. Typically, youth churches are independent denominationally whereas youth congregations are connected to a traditional church body but hold youth-only worship services.

²⁶ Ibid., 16-17.

unorthodox attempts at dealing with "UK's brutal reality," in which "up to one thousand young people leave the church every week," have reached the shores of the European mainland and have served as a catalyst for German youth pastors to consider this approach as a potential solution to its own ecclesial malaise. This has led to several productive conferences in the past few years including an ecumenical meeting in Oberhausen in the fall of 2005 with more than three hundred people in attendance as well as the establishment of about one hundred youth churches in Germany since the millennial year 2000. ²⁹ However, only a handful have been initiated in East Germany.

Definitions and Background Information

Germany, like its European neighbors, has a rich and conflictual history. Not until recently, however, has the German nation added chapters of unspeakable violence and heinous crimes against humanity to its storied past. The fall-out on the German psyche has been profound. German national pride is all but non-existent; the waving of the German flag visible only in soccer stadiums and on rare national holidays. Anyone displaying public patriotism is promptly and unequivocally and sometimes even vociferously vilified as a Nazi. Hitler's "Third Reich" throws a long, dark shadow over the mentality of the German people and reminders of its evil existence are ubiquitous in the forms of memorials, statutes, museums, etc.

Immediately following this brutal period, Germany, as the losing nation of the war, was parceled out amongst the four victorious Allied powers. All but one nation returned jurisdiction back into German hands. This resulted in the establishment of two politically

²⁷ Lamport, "The Rise of Youth Churches," 19.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ This is an estimate by Willi Schönauer, who maintains the national website for youth churches, in a personal e-mail to the author on March 23, 2006. Willi Schönauer, "Jugendkirche – Orte," Internetportal u. Jugendkirchen – Netzwerk e.V., http://www.jugendkirchen.org/ (accessed November 14, 2007).

and economically entirely different German nations with its most visible and dramatic symbol of division, the Berlin wall. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) with the aid of the American Marshall Plan, democratic principles, limited free-market economics, and a Teutonic work ethic created for itself what became known as the "economic miracle" The GDR (East Germany) on the other hand, under the strict and authoritarian tutelage of the USSR, replaced one totalitarian regime with another. Even though the fundamental political orientations of the two totalitarian regimes were diametrically opposed to each other, the distrust of and even repugnance for religion remained the same. Therefore, from the 1930's until 1989, for roughly two entire generations, this region's religious orientation was systematically marginalized, stigmatized, and even eradicated from the minds of its citizens. It can be said with relative certainty that nowhere else in this world has atheistic ideology taken such root.³¹ The repercussions thereof will still be felt for generations to come. The intent of this work is to reflect and discuss implications of this tortured period of political history for the ministry of church planting and evangelism today. And yet the cause for the spiritual recalcitrance of the East German people does not exhaust itself in the above description. It dates back several centuries and is due to certain societal and religious developments³² which will be presented and discussed as well.

³⁰ Wirtschaftswunder – approximately 1948-1960; in this time period the German economy, which had been utterly crushed by the war and its aftermath, developed to become the second strongest economy in the world behind that of the USA.

³¹ Atheistic philosophy and ideology seems to be more of a problem for "Protestant" than for "Catholic" countries. This can be ascribed to the emphasis on freedom of choice and conscience as well as democratic ideals in the Protestant-Reformation-Lutheran tradition. In the Catholic tradition with a structured, top-down leadership style of popes and bishops, individual freedom is curtailed. The result of the differing emphases is to be seen in the response to an outside philosophical system that was superimposed onto the conscience of a nation. In Catholic countries such as Poland, the Catholic soul remained even throughout the communist regime and when communism was ousted the strong faith in the Catholic Church was quickly re-established. This was not true of several Protestant countries such as the Czech Republic and East Germany. Both countries continue to have high rates of atheism.

³² Schröder. Konfessionslose erreichen. 66-86.

To help the reader through the maze of several new concepts and peculiar terminology, some time and space will be devoted here to define these.

Konfessionslosigkeit: a German term which can be translated 'confessionlessness' and is used by sociologists and theologians to describe the non-membership to an organized church or religious group; no affiliation or un-churched. According to Lutz Motikat the actual state of affairs of many people in the former GDR in relation to their affiliation to the church can be reduced into a most succinct formula: "confession: none." They do not belong to any church and are without any religious confession.

A-religiosity: a definite distinction is made between the confession-less (unchurched or those without a confession) and the a-religious, especially in comparison between East and West Germany. Even if many West Germans have over the last several decades turned their back on the church by exiting it, they would still have a belief in God and would feel insulted if anyone doubted their faith. This distinction, however, in the East is useless as the vast majority of the un-churched would also describe themselves as non-Christian and even a-religious. Religion, God and church are all completely irrelevant topics. Due to the lack of opportunities to wrestle with religious subject matters, an 'unconscious atheism,' seemingly deeply rooted but which most can barely articulate, has settled over this eastern region of Germany.

Jugendweihe: It can be translated as 'youth initiation ceremony' or 'youth consecration.' This term first appeared in 1852 in Germany and was conceived and

³³ Lutz Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit in Ostdeutschland – worum geht es, und wer ist herausgefordert?" in *Konfession: Keine – Gesellschaft und Kirchen vor der Herausforderung durch Konfessionslosigkeit – nicht nur in Ostdeutschland.* (Frankfurt: Gemeinschaftswerk der Evangelischen Publizistik, 1997), 19.

³⁴ Eberhard Tiefensee, "Homo areligiosus," Vorlesung im Rahmen der Ringvorlesung "Weltreligionen im 21. Jahrhundert" der Universität am 8. Mai 2001 in der Michaeliskirche in Erfurt. (Lecture at the University of Erfurt), http://www.uni-erfurt.de/tiefensee/Homo%20areligiosus.pdf (accessed September 18, 2007).

³⁵ Albrecht Döhnert, "Jugendweihe zwischen Familie, Politik und Religion," in Detlef Pollack, Religiöser und kirchlicher Wandel in Ostdeutschland 1989-1999: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 3 (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 250.

developed by early free-thought movements as an alternative to church confirmations. In 1954 it was adopted by the government of the former GDR as an obligatory pledge to socialism with the calculated objective of displacing the Christian rite of confirmation.

Wende (1989): November 9, 1989 marks one of the most significant days in the history of Germany and the world, the momentous fall of the Berlin wall precipitating the collapse of the entire communistic Eastern Bloc stronghold. It was also the beginning of the process of reunification between East and West Germany (October 3, 1990) after a forced separation lasting almost four decades. The German word 'Wende' means turning point or change and has become synonymous with the historic events surrounding the peaceful autumn revolution.

Post-socialistic: This term describes former socialist nations who have gone and continue to go through massive changes in all facets of national life, political, social, economic and cultural. The transformation of society is comprehensive. It has directly affected those nations which had experimented with the political system of socialism, primarily the Soviet Union and its satellite Eastern and Central European countries under its tutelage. As was mentioned above, the year 1989 marked a major shift in the Cold War configuration as most of these states began to dismantle socialism and moved towards more pluralistic and capitalistic forms of political and economic organisation. ³⁶

Overview of Theological Issues

One of the most significant portions of this work is the discussion of the biblical and theological implications of this ecclesiologically rather daring and dramatic attempt to deal with a spiritually critical situation. Non-theological pragmatism is not the answer; but neither is inaction and a refusal to address East Germany's robust rejection of the

³⁶ Duncan Light, "About Post-Socialism," Liverpool Hope University, http://www.hope.ac.uk/research/post-socialism/index.htm (accessed October 17, 2007).

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Christian faith by holding on to ecclesiologically traditional paradigms for the sake of "religious-cultural or socio-historical correctness." Jesus himself chastised Pharisaic intolerance when the strict adherence to their interpretation of God's law and their manmade traditions superseded the actual intent of God's law.³⁷

The major theological concern that arises immediately when first introduced to the subject matter is ecclesiology. What it comes down to is the definition of the church, the biblical understanding of the body of Christ. What is the essence of the church? What is its purpose? What is its raison d'etre? What are its values and its goals? It is essential that these questions are addressed from the biblical worldview. That is our anchor upon which we remain firmly rooted. Equally important is the task of cultural adaptation. Even though the truth does not change, culture and methodology do. We need to be prepared to contextualize the Gospel, to identify various cultural forms and to adjust the expression of the local church to fit the cultural context.

The peculiar East German phenomena of thorough secularism, complete religious indifference and widespread Konfessionslosigkeit (un-churchedness)³⁸ continue to have a debilitating effect not only on the church and its ministry, but on society and culture at large. The challenge is to carefully navigate the church through two equally threatening ice bergs on the sea of ecclesiology. We dare neither to bow to the cultural Zeitgeist on the one hand, nor to allow the encrusted interpretation of traditionalism to determine our attempt of making church relevant, engaging and theologically sound.

Certainly a second major issue to be discussed is missiology. The fact that East

Germany has not yet been identified as an unreached people group³⁹ by missiologists does

³⁷ Lord of the Sabbath – Luke 6:1-11.

³⁸ Schröder, Konfessionslose erreichen, 255.

³⁹ Officially it has not been so identified even though two sources have described East Germany as an unreached people's group. Stefan Keller "Church Planting in an A-Religious, Post-Socialist Context" (Th.M. diss., University of South Africa, 2007), 99. In his thesis paper Stefan Keller refers to the East German Lutheran pastor Astrid Eichler who in the yearly meeting of the German branch of the Lausanne

not remove the sense of urgency of the missionary task. One of the primary questions that arises on the mission field concerns itself with the church. What will or should the church look like in this particular culture? Will the people discover their own culture in the church services that are offered and the way church is done?⁴⁰ Ecclesiology and missiology need to team up to answer this question adequately, soundly and passionately.

The context of the ministry needs to be taken into careful consideration and the unchanging message of hope in Jesus Christ contextualized into the here and now. The search for "the key" to penetrate a culture or people group or a certain urban district with the Gospel carries within itself several dangers. One can get so caught up in this frequently elusive search that the fundamentals are neglected, to the detriment of the ministry itself. A healthy balance of the traditional methods (continuity) in conjunction with creative and original approaches (innovation) will serve the ministry well. For the purposes of this research and thesis, the attempt was to show that precisely this balance is not only justified but wise.

Other questions considered in this work include the following: What are the positive aspects of this youth church approach and what are its dangers or drawbacks? Can the planting of youth churches be viewed as a viable missions strategy or a valid missionary tool in light of the resistance of adults? Can young people serve as bridges into the community? Can youth churches be viewed as a spearhead that will soften the ground for multi-generational and ecclesiologically better balanced communities of faith? Do we

Committee on World Evanglisation in 2001 used this term in describing the East German context. See the article in the archives of the Evangelische Allianz online, "Sind hauptamtliche Verkündiger ein Missionshindernis?," Evangelische Allianz online, http://www.ead.de/aktuell/archiv.php?id=164 (accessed on November 14, 2007).

⁴⁰ Michael Herbst, Und sie dreht sich doch! Wie sich die Kirche im 21. Jahrhundert ändern kann und muss. (Asslar: Gerth Medien, 2001), 29.

allow missiology to trump ecclesiology? Should missiology be allowed to re-shape our ecclesiology?⁴¹

The plethora of questions above can be reduced into several basic theological concepts: sovereignty of God, missiology, ecclesiology (especially a biblical theology of youth churches), evangelism, culture and contextualization, methodology and leadership. Substantial space is dedicated to dealing with these concerns. In summary the simple and yet profound question is considered: how does God look at this? The humble attempt is made to ascertain God's perspective on the youth church concept.

Literature Review

Informed by the theological/biblical issues mentioned above and given the challenging East German context time and space is given to creative, dramatic and yet serious theological attempts at contextualizing church. Ecclesiologies of contemporary, global theological thinkers are compared to traditional, conservative interpretations.

Representatives of the emergent church, youth church and mission-shaped thinkers are brought to bear on the current ecclesiological debate. The works of Lesslie Newbigin, the British missionary statesman and theologian sheds some light on the area of missiology in relation to ecclesiology and post-modernism. As the writer is coming from a Reformed perspective, it should come as no surprise to the reader that this viewpoint will be highlighted and discussed. The great reformed theologian John Calvin and other reformed thinkers including leading theologians in the Reformed camp of the 20th century such as Louis Berkhof, Edmund Clowney and Wayne Grudem are discussed on the issue of ecclesiology.

⁴¹ Graham Cray, *Youth congregations and the Emerging Church*. (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2002).

Since one of the biggest challenges and tasks of establishing youth churches is the training of new leadership, considerable time is given in addressing this matter with a proposal for leadership training for church planters of youth churches in the East German context. (See Appendix A – "Leadership/Church Planting Track for Martin-Bucer Seminary").

The historical, cultural, socio-economic, political, religious, ecclesiological background of the former GDR is thoroughly researched by utilizing the wealth of written and verbal documentation, which is readily available and easily accessible. Theologians and sociologists of the EKD and other free church denominations as well as secular sociologists and historians have made numerous attempts at understanding the various dynamics and factors which have influenced, and continue to influence, the culture, mentality and world-view of the citizens of the now defunct nation of the GDR. In the area of culture and religion the extensive and instructive research and writings of Detlef Pollack, Gert Pickel, Peter Maser, Michael Herbst, Heiner Barz, Erhart Neubert and Sabine Schröder are heard.

Methodology

As mentioned above, this is an exploratory work as little research has been done in this area of youth churches in the East German context. The emphasis, therefore, is placed on quality of the research and not quantity. The few existing youth churches⁴² in the former GDR have been researched and their leaders/pastors interviewed for insight into the history, denominational affiliation, vision, life, values, goals, strategies, philosophy of ministry, leadership structure, leadership style and finances of these attempts at making the Gospel culturally relevant and palatable for this age group. Some on-site visits of some

⁴² KRAFTWERK – Dresden, Junge Kirche Berlin, Jugendkirche Marzahn.

of these existing youth churches were made to gain a more comprehensive picture of the different ministries.

In-depth, unstructured interviews of several youth church planters (both over the phone and in person) have assisted in capturing some of the thoughts on religious life of the people of the former GDR, on Christian faith and the process of church planting in this environment. For example the interview with Alexander Garth, the planter of two youth churches for the Lutheran denomination – one in the rural area of the German state of Thuringia and the other in a far-eastern district of Berlin, reveals deep and thought-provoking insight into the soul of the East German individual and his church's attempts at reaching him/her for Christ.

Interviews of a few other individuals who lived and ministered under the former GDR regime supplement the information gathered through literature research. The data thus collected was analyzed and appropriate implications drawn for future youth church planting endeavors.

Conclusion

This work and research should contribute to the discussion and interaction of those who have a call to the ministry of church planting in this challenging location.

Chapter two delves into the background, the ethos, the value system, the political structures and the spiritual dynamics of the former German Democratic Republic to be able to understand why the East German people in general are so completely and thoroughly "immunized to the Gospel." It presents the horrendous current state of spiritual affairs and a few possible responses for the church.

As part of the literature review in chapter two the challenge of the youth generation is portrayed and the youth church concept defined and described.

Chapter three provides the theological and biblical framework of this study discussing the theological, ecclesiological and missiological foundations found in the Scriptures and relating them to the concepts of culture, contextualization, church planting and leadership. All of these are brought to bear upon the controversial concept of youth churches and deal seriously with the legitimate concerns raised by thoughtful scholarship.

The methodological approach to this research project is the subject matter of the fourth chapter. An exploratory multi-case study is employed to investigate three youth churches and two evangelistic ministries to youth and children in the East German context using primarily the most common form of data collection, the interview.

The fifth chapter reveals the data display and the initial analysis of the case study evidence, the actual description of the five case studies. Through the cross case analysis, it begins to recognize certain themes of the study by processing the interviews and other collected data. Taking the data and evaluations in consideration, a visionary model for a youth church in East Germany is presented. At the end of the chapter the practical principles operative in the various youth churches are summarized and displayed in a "cross case analysis chart."

Chapter six provides the final discussion of the data, identifying major streams, assimilating and classifying the data, answering the research questions and presenting outcomes and conclusions. As part of the outcomes of this research project is a proposal for a leadership training program for youth church planters as part of a missiological strategy for reaching this geographic area with the grace of the Gospel of Christ. (See Appendix A – "Leadership/Church Planting Track for Martin-Bucer Seminary").

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Section I: Current State of Affairs

Chapter two delves into the background, the ethos, the value system, the political structures and the spiritual dynamics of the former German Democratic Republic to be able to understand why the East German people in general are so completely and thoroughly "immunized to the Gospel." It presents the horrendous current state of spiritual affairs.

As part of the literature review in this chapter the challenge of the youth generation is portrayed and the youth church concept defined and described.

The present spiritual condition of the population of the former GDR is marked by a mass phenomenon that has been termed by religious sociologists as Konfessionslosigkeit, a German term indicating "no confession" and describing the un-connectedness of the people to the church. Almost eighty percent of East Germans are no longer members of any church today, many of them having been born into a confession-less home.

The process of becoming confessionless, of disaffiliating from the church, was viewed differently in the two different nations of Germany. In West Germany it was diagnosed as part of the process of individualization, of coming of age. The decrease of church membership was a social process that accompanied the modern process of secularization. Emancipation from authorities and institutions, which included the church, was the motivation. It was a personal choice, a deliberate act in exercising personal autonomy. No longer was 'leaving the church' considered a taboo or stigmatized.

In the West, then, it was a 'voluntary secularization.' The opposite was true for those living in East Germany. In the former GDR it was a 'forced secularization,' a a process that not only was larger in scale but had an entirely different form and feel. The massive church exodus was not an expression of coming-of-age or of social emancipation. It was rather the path of least resistance against the political power machine that wanted to eradicate autonomy and personal choice. 44

Konfessionslosigkeit is the result of an administratively supported and socio-political desired de-traditionalisation. ⁴⁵ Today many East Germans are alienated from the church sometimes in the second and third generation. High barriers of the linguistic, cultural, emotional and religious type have been erected and a durable, tough mentality against the church and religion has been established over the years.

The dramatic situation becomes disturbingly clear when one compares the statistics of church membership for the year 1949, the year of the founding of the GDR, when over ninety percent of the East German population belonged to one of the two larger churches (eleven percent Catholic and eighty-one percent Protestant⁴⁶), and 1990, the year of its dissolution, when church membership had dwindled to barely thirty percent (four percent Catholic and twenty-five percent Protestant).⁴⁷ Therefore, those without any confession represent the largest grouping today; it has grown ten-fold within the forty year history of the GDR. In comparison, in the same time period the contingent of the non-church

⁴³ Heiner Meulemann, "Erzwungene Säkularisierung in der DDR – Wiederaufleben des Glaubens in Ostdeutschland? Religiöser Glaube in ost- und westdeutschen Alterkohorten zwischen 1991-1998" in *Atheismus und religiöse Indifferenz: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 10* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003), 271.

⁴⁴ Ehrhart Neubert, "Gründlich ausgetrieben" Begegnungen 13 (1996), 33-34.

⁴⁵ The German sociological term is Enttraditionalisierung.

⁴⁶ The Protestant church in Germany is the Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (EKD), consisting of a community of 23 Lutheran, Reformed and United regional churches.

⁴⁷ Detlef Pollack, "Der Wandel der religiös-kirchlichen Lage in Ostdeutschland nach 1989," in *Religiöser und kirchlicher Wandel in Ostdeutschland 1989-1999: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion* "*Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 3* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 19.

members in the West increased from four to only ten percent. In 1950 about ninety-six percent were members of a church which was reduced to eighty-five percent in 1990.⁴⁸

This process of deliberate de-Christianization and of emptying the church was so comprehensive and its effects so devastating that sociologists, theologians and pastors have seemed to outdo each other in describing the results in eloquent pictures. "If Western Europe can be described as a church disaster area (P.L. Berger), then East Germany is the epicenter." Eberhard Tiefensee continues by utilizing the ominously prophetic description "Gottesfinsternis" (God-darkness) by different philosophers such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Buber and identifying East Germany as being in its deepest shadow (Kernschatten). East Germany appears to hold a unique position globally. Ehrhart Neubert used the German word for a nuclear worst-case scenario, or Maximum Credible Accident (MCA), (GAU – Größter Anzunehmender Zufall), intensified it by prefacing it with 'super' to describe in rather emotional terms the spiritual ruins that have been left behind by the GDR regime, the term "Supergau of the church". ⁵⁰

Special Case?

This does raise the question if the former GDR represents a special case in the area of religion and Konfessionslosigkeit? Or is the present spiritual situation merely the consequence of an unfavorable constellation of circumstances and conditions?

As the quotes and statistics seem to indicate, the question above can be answered in the affirmative but with qualifications. Most of the religious sociologists observe the

⁴⁸ Pollack, "Der Wandel," 19.

⁴⁹ Eberhard Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch? – Ostdeutsche Mentalität zwischen Agnostizismus und flottierender Religiosität," in *Wiedervereinigte Seelsorge – Die Herausforderung der katholischen Kirche in Deutschland* (Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 2000), 24-53.

⁵⁰ Erhart Neubert as quoted in Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53. Neubert is a protestant sociologist of religion who used this term at an official task-force meeting of the Bundestag on the topic of "Evaluation and analysis of the history and aftermath of the SED dictatorship in East Germany"

sheer numbers in the statistics and utilize adjectives such as 'unique' and 'exceptional' in describing the religious situation in the former GDR. Besides the Czech Republic, it is probably the only area in Europe and probably in the entire world in which the a-religious group forms the solid majority, about sixty-five percent of the population.⁵¹ In comparison to other Eastern European nations such numbers are quite piercing and in no other Eastern European nation is the religious situation marked by Konfessionslosigkeit and a-religiosity to the extent it is in the GDR. An enormous, extensive de-Christianization and Konfessionslosigkeit in the heartland of the Reformation developed where seventy percent never pray and sixty percent never attend church.⁵² In East Germany, the need for religion in the year 1990 was no longer in existence and the population in general can be describes as being "religiously unmusical." ⁵³ Tiefensee borrows the terminology and metaphor from Max Weber who does not have the East German context in mind when he describes the "religiously musical" individuals as virtuosos, who have direct access to the experiential world of faith. The "religiously unmusical" individuals, on the other hand, make up the mass of people and lack this access. Tiefensee would take this a step further and describe the ordinary East German as one who has no access to the world of faith, having had no opportunity to have a religious experience and in addition to that has no awareness for this lack of access. This entire area of religion, faith and God remains a matter of obscurity and hence, indifference.

"only" sixty-five percent are a-religious.

⁵¹ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between being without a confession (Konfessionslosigkeit) and being a-religious. A person can be religious without being a member of a church. In East Germany nearly eighty percent are without confession but

⁵² Wolfgang Jagodzinski, "Religiöse Stagnation in den neuen Bundesländern: Fehlt das Angebot oder fehlt die Nachfrage?" in Detlef Pollack, *Religiöser und kirchlicher Wandel in Ostdeutschland 1989-1999: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 3* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 51.

⁵³ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

As can be expected, the percentage of a-religiosity in formerly communistic countries is higher on average, but not impressive. One researcher concludes: "With exception of the former GDR, the communists have not recorded many victories in their fight against religion." ⁵⁴

The lone dissenting voice in the discussion if the GDR is a special case suggests that the bleak religious situation can be attributed to the well-established factors for a-religiosity in general: 1. socialist repression; 2. protestant history; 3. moderate level of modernization and the process of secularization. The tiny Baltic nation of Estonia is an example in which all three factors have played a significant role in the last decades and which displays an equal degree of Konfessionslosigkeit. Taking these alternative factors of explanation in consideration Pickel concludes that East Germany is not a special case.

Undoubtedly the argument can be made that other countries have similar a-religious tendencies, many due to the seemingly inevitable processes of secularization, but this in no wise is a sufficient explanation for the overwhelming evidence to support the claim that the GDR has established an unique category, holding a special rank in the department of Konfessionslosigkeit and a-religiosity.

Reasons for the decline of the church

Considering the current state of religion in the former GDR the immediate question that comes to the fore is "why?" What are the reasons for this seemingly hopeless state of church affairs? Why has the religious interest of the general population been in a downward spiral for decades?

⁵⁵ Gert Pickel, "Areligiösität, Antireligiosität, Religiosität: Ostdeutschland als Sonderfall niedriger Religiosität im osteuropäischen Rahmen?" in *Atheismus und religiöse Indifferenz: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 10* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003), 247-269.

⁵⁴ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

A helpful distinction in the discussion of this matter is implied by Kerstin Storch who refers to external causes and "internal secularization." For obvious reasons, and with the backing of voluminous research, the main external cause of the thorough de-Christianization and major decline of the church in the GDR was the restrictive and repressive actions and policies of the SED regime. There is a noticeable correlation between periods of fierce political repressions and major waves of church exoduses. Both reached their climax in the 1950's when administrative, legal and political measures hostile to the church were common: arrests of church workers, obstruction of church functions, events and services, state grants for churches were reduced or completely eliminated, attacks on the financial basis of the church and even confiscation of church property. In addition, in various businesses and companies waves of church withdrawals were organized; there was negative propaganda and campaigns against youth work at church.

For church members, the pressure to leave the church increased as their children were disadvantaged, marginalized and psychologically mistreated even up to 1989.⁵⁷ Discrimination was leveled against believing students who were denied places in some vocational training schools and institutions of higher learning. Certain careers were completely barred for them such as the military, security, diplomacy and even some professions in the economic field. This resulted in an under-representation of Christians in societal, educational, economic and political leadership positions.⁵⁸

What cannot be underestimated when considering external causes is the significant impact of the educational system which was exploited and misused as a progandastic tool

⁵⁶ Kerstin Storch, "Konfessionslosigkeit in Ostdeutschland," in *Atheismus und religiöse Indifferenz: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 10* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2003), 237-239.

⁵⁷ Neubert, "Gründlich ausgetrieben," 27.

⁵⁸ Pollack, Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft, 426.

by the communistic regime. Nothing less than a strategic re-educational campaign of major proportions was being implemented and it had a profound effect on the young people of the state.

In addition, early in its existence, in the mid-fifties, the SED pushed the 'Jugendweihe' (youth initiation ceremony or youth consecration) as a strategy not only to combat the church and its influence confrontationally, but also to substitute for it. The year 1958 marked the peak of the conflict between church and state concerning the establishment and installation of the Jugendweihe, the official secular substitute for church confirmation. The reduction of participants was most remarkable between the years 1956 and 1959 when church confirmations dropped from seventy-five percent of youth of the GDR to thirty-three percent. ⁵⁹

In the second phase, in the seventies, the 'Jugendweihe' was converted into a state cult, one of many quasi-religious ceremonies and venerations of the state.⁶⁰ It fulfilled various functions in the former GDR society such as the ordering of relationships of the various generations to each other, the structuring of time and the integration of the youth into the society.⁶¹

It became an East German phenomenon but it was not its invention. This term first appeared in 1852 in Germany and was conceived and developed by early free-thought movements as an alternative to church confirmations. It can be viewed as a part of the modern history of atheism. A course of moral instructions for children founded not on Christian teaching and principles but on cultural history was developed and the concluding ceremony, 'Jugendweihe' marked a rite of passage for children leaving school at the age

⁵⁹ Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft*, 425. Also between the years 1955 and 1960, infant baptisms dropped from two-thirds to one-third and church weddings were no longer sought out by fifty percent of couples but only by twenty-five percent.

⁶⁰ Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit," 36.

⁶¹ Döhnert, "Jugendweihe," 242.

of fourteen. The actual form of this ritual has virtually remained the same since the 1890's. In 1954 it was adopted by the government of the former GDR as an obligatory pledge to socialism with the calculated objective of displacing the Christian rite of confirmation. It was the intentional strategy of the leaders of the official party to train the young people towards the socialist ideal with an atheistic orientation as its substance. The dispute between church confirmation and 'Jugendweihe' in the twentieth century was always a contest for the hearts and minds of the youth. Even though the SED presented it as world-view neutral, it had a clear anti-church line of attack as it was conceived as a direct competition to confirmation: it was planned at the same time for the same age group and it was seen as a consecration with a vow. Its purpose was to alienate the youth from the church and to bind it to its worldview of socialism and atheism. ⁶²

Before the wall came down in 1989, ninety-five percent⁶³ of youth in the GDR participated in the 'Jugendweihe.' With its collapse, this major ideological support system gave way initially, but unlike several other official state youth organizations, the 'Jugendweihe' experienced an astonishing and surprising renaissance. In 1993, forty percent of fourteen year olds participated in the 'Jugendweihe' and in Berlin sometimes entire grades attended it together.⁶⁴

Today's 'Jugendweihe' is a post-communistic, cultural product but still firmly erected upon the forced successes of the SED church politics which created with repressive methods a place in the family celebration culture of the former GDR.

Especially for its traumatized citizens the 'Jugendweihe,' as a family tradition and ritual, provides comfort, orientation and stability during these chaotic, perplexing and confusing

⁶² Helmut Hanisch and Detlef Pollack. *Religion – ein neues Schulfach: Eine empirische Untersuchung zum religiösen Umfeld und zur Akzeptanz des Religionsunterrichts aus der Sicht von Schülerinnen und Schülern in den neuen Bundesländern.* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1997), 27.

⁶³ Döhnert, "Jugendweihe," 236.

⁶⁴ Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit," 34.

times of post-wall. Emptied of its ideological content advocating socialism and atheism, some observers still fear that it has remained totalitarian in its core and thus dangerous for a democratic society. It continues to be an intentional substitute for church confirmation, squeezing out the Christian tradition.⁶⁵

As mentioned above there is a clear connection between political repression and the decline of religiosity, churchedness and church life. These above-mentioned external reasons for this extensive loss of faith and minimization of the significance of the church in the GDR, however plausible and at the same time troubling they may be, there must be more than meets the eye, there must be a deeper reason or reasons, especially when viewing the East German church situation in a wider Eastern European context and comparing the data with those of other socialist countries, some of which practiced more restrictive politics of religion, or over a longer time period as was the case in the Soviet Union, or with more severe consequences for its dissidents as was the case in Albania which occasionally executed religious rebels. 66 Why was the church unable to resist the pressure from without? Were there other factors that played a role in this tragic deterioration of the church? Several sociologists, theologians and historians indeed point to an 'inner secularization' within the very heart of church members dating back to the nineteenth century. Many people in the former GDR had lost their inner faith long before, even though they remained members of their respective churches. For some a mentality of 'being a Christian without church' developed, a possible popular side effect of the enlightenment. Many had reduced their church involvement to church visits on special occasions and a general process of loosening church ties, drifting away from faith and church, and nominalism was underway. ⁶⁷ The external pressure, therefore, served only as

⁶⁵ Motikat, 37.

⁶⁶ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

the catalyst that formalized their existing distance to the church and religion. It gave them a convenient reason to bid their church farewell. The combination of an already weakened church, due to the inner secularization described above, the just overcome Nazi dictatorship with its repulsive policies, and a second politically repressive regime proved to be a formidable challenge for which the church could find no match.

To pursue the analysis of this distinctively East German phenomenon of 'Konfessionslosigkeit' even further and to inquire about the reasons for this 'inner secularization,' the marginal attachment to the protestant church of this particular region of Germany, some have identified the reformation and its theology as the root of the problem. The teaching of the reformers emphasized the immediacy of each individual to God in its soteriology. Not the church is the final authority, the only dispenser of God's grace and salvation, but access to God is found in Jesus Christ alone who has made Himself available to all without the necessity of a human mediator such as clergy. Therefore, the protestant faithful developed a somewhat distanced or occasional relationship with the church over the years and the sense of indispensability of church was lost. In addition to its theology, the reformation also unleashed a whole series of religious wars in Germany.

Another historical event contributing to the incipient inner secularization in the nineteenth century that should be mentioned is the introduction of the agrarian model of landed nobility (Gutsherrschaft) in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the geographic area of today's East Germany gathering all of the land into great estates and practically making most of the people landless, wage-earning agricultural laborers. This was different from other regions of Germany where it was possible for peasants to be land owners and exercise some political influence. It is precisely this sizable agrarian working

⁶⁷ Neubert, "Gründlich ausgetrieben", 94-99. Neubert claims that this trend toward nominalism is also evident in West Germany, but a strong sense of tradition keeps most church members from actually taking the step to leave their church (cf. 1992 figures of church membership in West Germany eighty-five percent and East Germany thirty percent).

class that the churches in that area lost due to their farming their land on Sundays and due to their migratory habits. ⁶⁸

If that is not sufficient, historians can point back to the forced conversions during the time of the Christianization of pagan northern Europe during the time of Charles the Great of the eight century or to the imprudent entanglement of throne and altar, state and church throughout the centuries.

A second major reason for the 'inner secularization' is the complex subject matter of modernization beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and all the other sociological concepts of modernity connected with it: industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, higher education, economic advancement, increase in cultural opportunities, etc. ⁶⁹ A small minority of sociologists such as Horst Dähn, even go as far as denying that Konfessionslosigkeit, the shrinking of the churches and de-Christianization, is the result of the ubiquitous propaganda of the atheistic worldview propagated by the SED regime and its repressive policies. He maintains that other prerequisites and typical features for a modern industrial society had to be in place such as anonymity, mobility, the dissolution of customs, habits, traditions, etc. to allow the ideologically atheistic worldview to impact East Germany society as significantly as it did. ⁷⁰ This argument is countered by Pollack, Neubert and others by pointing to West Germany with its rapid process of modernization during the same time period all the while maintaining its religious orientation and connectedness. That is not to say that modernization has not

⁶⁸ Schröder, Konfessionslose erreichen, 68-70.

⁶⁹ Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft*, 430-432. Also in Tiefensee, "Religiös unmusikalisch?," 24-53. Tiefensee lists the three well-known, accepted and above-mentioned reasons for the a-religiosity of the GDR: the state-sponsored ideological repression, inner secularisation, and the onset of modernity. He then carefully adds a fourth tentative explanation which religious sociologists have overlooked, namely what he calls "the permanent German identity crisis" identifiable as early as in the religious wars of the sixteenth century and culminating in the extreme collapse of 1945 and then again somewhat weakened in 1989. Both dates can be seen as 'biographical crashes' for the individual and the nation. And weakened identities cannot deal adequately with changes or challenges leading to an inability to resist pressures from the outside.

⁷⁰ Horst Dähn as quoted in Pollack, *Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft*, p. 23.

affected and infected the church in West Germany. It has and that with significant force and passion with the results all too obvious in its culture. What is essential for this study is the impact on church membership which is minimal in comparison to that of the former GDR.

There seems to be an overall consensus, albeit a few dissenting voices, that the systematic, organized political reshaping of the entire society, a complete transformation from the hated bourgeoisie paradigm into a thoroughly socialist dreamland was one of the main factors. ⁷¹ It included a total, comprehensive break from the traditions of the past in all areas of human interaction and public life. It was a social restructuring of gargantuan proportions that was initiated at the inception of the GDR as an independent nation in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Collectivization of farms and trades, the banishment of the landed gentry ⁷² and the disempowerment of the educated classes were rigorously pursued. This broke the back of the protestant church which had established itself in and relied heavily on the farmers, academicians, and self-employed craftsmen. ⁷³

This major shifting, or re-orientation, of society, which included an intentional isolation and ostracism of the church by the political leadership of the SED, had an immediate impact on the church and its members. It is a known sociological fact that the transfer of religious practices and beliefs usually happen best in matured social milieus, in homogenous, unified groups with common values, attitudes, world view and helpful verbal interaction.⁷⁴ The plausibility of religion and its exceptional beliefs in the supernatural is heightened by these structures and by repeated communication of religious

⁷¹ Detlef Pollack, *Säkularisierung – ein moderner Mythos? Studien zum religiösen Wandel in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Gulde Druck, 2003), 105. The German sociological term is Enttraditionalisierung or de-traditionalisation.

⁷² Class status achieved by virtue of land possession.

⁷³ Pollack, *Säkularisierung*, 80.

⁷⁴ Pollack, Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft, 434.

truth. This process was thwarted and the sidelining of the church effectively orchestrated by the powers that be. For obvious reasons this radical re-orientation, the complete break from all traditions had a profound effect on the biographical continuity of the people.

It must be mentioned that the complicated relationship between church and state also experienced times of rapprochement, especially after the initial phase of ideological conviction, that religion as the opiate of the people and as the tool of the ruling class to maintain control and subdue the proletariat, was on its way out. The persistence and stubbornness of religion forced the ideologues of the SED regime to change their hostile approach toward religion. Different levels of conciliation and cooperation with the churches were attempted and methods were developed to utilize, even exploit, the church towards the grand end of communism. The question was asked how the churches could assist in the development of the socialist state.

Finally, the 1989 historic peaceful revolution designated as "Wende" (turning point or change) needs to be considered in this discussion. Initially, it was welcomed by the vast majority of the people on both sides of the Berlin wall with great euphoria, jubilation and exhilaration. The pictures which went around the world have been etched into the memories of most people. But the initial joy quickly turned into dissatisfaction, frustration and misunderstanding as cultural differences due to the development of two totally different political systems over the course of forty years emerged. In addition an estimated € 1,500 billion ⁷⁵ have been invested into the economy of East Germany which has greatly diminished the initial enthusiasm.

It is interesting to note that for East Germans the more positive their experience was in the former GDR, the more ambivalent their description of the 'Wende.' This

⁷⁵ "1, 5 Billionen Euro. Deutsche Einheit noch viel teurer." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 September 2004, http://www.faz.net/s/Rub594835B672714A1DB1A121534F010EE1/Doc~EE753377E6D/404F349DB254927D4FE846~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html (accessed October 15, 2007). This is a controversial estimate. On the other side of the spectrum is an estimate of only € 15 billion from 1990-2003.

should not be surprising as the privileged elite within the boundaries of the former GDR and even normal citizens who were sympathetic towards the Marxist-Leninist ideology would have lived comfortably if not necessarily luxuriously. But most point to various gains that this historical turning point has brought such as freedom to travel, availability of cars and superior clothing, improved and increased variety of groceries, political freedom to express personal opinions, and increased recreational activities. Generally speaking, the values of freedom have been appreciated by most.⁷⁶

The 'Wende' brought about a complete system change with sweeping political, economic, legal, social and cultural transformations which has affected the entire population in a profound and enduring manner. This dramatic re-shaping of the nation was as thorough and complete as the previous one in the other direction when the political leaders of the former GDR sought to make a clean break from its historical past and traditions. For obvious reasons this major shift in all areas of life caused massive insecurities, with pressures to adjust to this new system immediately without the time for proper psychological reflection and deliberation. ⁷⁷

Some have suggested that these extraordinary changes were the result of a deliberately orchestrated and ushered in protestant revolution. Research has shown, however, that the apparently sudden collapse of the former GDR was due to the inner disintegration of the social structure that had been established and maintained artificially by the closing of the borders and by the usage of repressive measures. The reasons include the following: the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border leading to a mass exit

⁷⁶ Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Wie weit ist der Weg nach Deutschland? Sozialpsychologie der Jugend in der postsozialistischen Welt.* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997), 343.

⁷⁷ Kerstin Storch, "Kontingenzbewältigungen – eine qualitative Untersuchung über den Zusammenhang von Konfessionalität bzw. Konfessionslosigkeit und der Bewältigung des kritischen Lebensereignisses 'Wende'," in Detlef Pollack, *Religiöser und kirchlicher Wandel in Ostdeutschland 1989-1999: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 3* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 260.

⁷⁸ Pollack. Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft. 454.

of East Germans in the fall of 1989, the abandonment of the Brezhnev doctrine⁷⁹ and the renunciation of the Soviet regime to support the crisis-ridden GDR government, the weakening of GDR leadership, the processes of loosening of the strict policies in all societal institutions, including the SED, imbalanced distribution of the various powers leading to the break-down in the tight GDR system and last but not least the role of the church and other opposition groups.⁸⁰

However, as was mentioned above, in terms of the attitude towards religion, the Wende brought no major change. The political repression was lifted, but the atheistic shroud remained.

In summary, even though it must be maintained that the political stance and policies of the SED was the major force behind the process of de-Christianization and Konfessionslosigkeit in East Germany, other factors mentioned above cannot be ignored and have contributed to the present state of the church. A hardened, durable, robust Konfessionslosigkeit⁸¹ has settled over East Germany. The head of the EKD, Bishop Wolfgang Huber stated some time ago that the SED regime was in no other area as successful as in the de-Christianization of its society. And Neubert contends that the Christian heritage was not just buried but was downright plucked out roots and all. 83

⁷⁹ "Brezhnev Doctrine." Speech by Leonid Brezhnev on November 13, 1968, http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/14/documents/doctrine/ (accessed October 15, 2007). In a speech given in November 1968 Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev justified the invasion of Czechoslovakia stating that "Czechoslovakia's detachment from the socialist community would have come into conflict with its own vital interests and would have been detrimental to the other socialist states." This justification for interference became known in the West as the "Brezhnev Doctrine" and provided a policy to protect communism from outside influences and secure the centralized power of Moscow over its satellites. It remained in effect until 1989 when Gorbachev denounced it. In fact, during this time he announced a new policy and coined it somewhat jokingly as the "Sinatra doctrine" referring to the well-known song 'My Way.' It allowed the neighboring Warsaw pact nations to determine their own internal affairs.

⁸⁰ Pollack, Kirche in der Organisationsgesellschaft, 454.

⁸¹ Storch, "Konfessionslosigkeit in Ostdeutschland," 240.

⁸² Ibid., 232.

⁸³ Neubert, "Gründlich ausgetrieben," 98.

However one wants to describe the spiritual scenario in East Germany today, and many don't expect a major improvement in the near future, it is obvious that whatever happened in the former GDR, whatever the reasons for this astounding loss of religious interest in less than two generations, the challenge of the churches today is immense.

Possible responses

Not only have religious sociologists, theologians and pastors in Germany written and reflected on the present condition of the distinctive East German Konfessionslosigkeit and a-religiosity and its causes, but they have also presented many thoughtful ideas and possible solutions to the profound spiritual darkness. The solution has to begin with the attitude of the believing church and its leaders in refusing to write off the former East as "a religious no-man's land," 84 but instead seeing it with eyes of faith and hope borne out of the love of the Father. Undoubtedly, the intentional, systematic and comprehensive breakdown of traditions by the repressive SED regime and its passionate push towards secularization has left painful footprints in the psyche of the church. The social process of religious erosion has affected church members, but their mission is to refuse to make virtues out of the spiritual hardships and the religious poverty suffered under the iron fist of communistic ideologists. Additional grief work is necessary in the process of working through the past but it is also a time for innovation in a new socio-religious context. A clear challenge has been issued by the likes of Eberhard Tiefensee when he writes that the task of Christians "is not just to assess the status quo, but to change it." This means that what the church needs more than ever is a clear missionary concept of church development which simultaneously appeals to the un-churched and confessionless

⁸⁴ Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 106.

⁸⁵ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

population. ⁸⁶ It has to be transformed from the traditional Volkskirche to a missionary and missionizing church. Church leaders need to strengthen the self-confidence of church members and to encourage them to trust their own skills in relating to their confessionless peers. ⁸⁷

The self-confident attitude about themselves and their faith needs to be balanced with a gentleness in the bringing of the message of Christ, not as a "Western invasion but as a religious truth from the East." Many East Germans are sensitive and ambivalent about their past, sometimes responding critically and other times defensively. Part of the attitude of humble learning is the refusal to show contempt for the other side⁸⁹

Working on the self-confidence and attitude of church members is only the beginning. Mission in the East requires the careful "laying of a foundation of Christian-religious competencies which must be applied broadly in the public, society and culture." This process includes "a religious re-alphabetization," a "re-education to get back to ground zero" before the actual mission work can begin. Educational programs should loosen the hardened and reinforced opinions and prejudices about Christianity and the church. This re-educational process would include providing skills which would lead to "the emancipation and liberation of the individual" which then leads to the ability to

⁸⁶ Lutz Motikat, "Kirche ohne Konfessionslose? Verluste und Chancen auf dem Weg zu einer offenen Kirche" in *Konfession: Keine – Gesellschaft und Kirchen vor der Herausforderung durch Konfessionslosigkeit – nicht nur in Ostdeutschland.* (Frankfurt: Gemeinschaftswerk der Evangelischen Publizistik, 1997), 267.

⁸⁷ Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit," 43-45.

⁸⁸ Schmidtchen, Wie weit ist der Weg nach Deutschland?, 365.

⁸⁹ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

⁹⁰ Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 95.

⁹¹ Ehrhart Neubert, "Kirche und Konfessionslosigkeit," in Religiöser Wandel in Ostdeutschland 1989-1999: Veröffentlichungen der Sektion "Religionssoziologie" der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, Band 3 (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 389.

⁹² Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit," 47.

⁹³ Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 101.

freely choose church and religion. A theology of freedom is necessary for the healing of the "forced socialization" towards socialism and atheism. Jürgen Ziemer, envisages a new counseling concept which deals theologically with the East Germans in their mental behavior and psychological problems as the result of "a distortion of the individual." The unanswered question remains if the people will avail themselves of such opportunities.

The church will need to practice an open and humble attitude towards the public, open for interaction and humble in the sense that the church should be willing to learn from those it hopes to teach, to create a theology for non-theologians to be able to answer life's questions together. The ability to dialogue is of the essence. To engage the atheist in meaningful conversation on the topic of theology and the ultimate realities presupposes the capacity to speak (Sprachfähigkeit) the same cultural language. The burden lies squarely on the shoulders of the church. One way of doing this is to find sources in society for "communicable religiosity as Christian paths towards faith." Both the Junge Kirche Berlin and the Jugendkirche Marzahn have successfully used the medium of the Gospel choir, the music style of which was popularized in Germany by Whoopi Goldberg's movie "Sister Act" released in 1992. Atheistic young people are exposed to the message of the Christian faith by singing the lyrics many of which come straight out of the Bible.

An essential ingredient of the solution is the absolute necessity of perseverance, patience and tenacity of church planters in the face of stiff opposition. Change and

⁹⁴ Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 101.

⁹⁵ Jürgen Ziemer as quoted in Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 99. This counseling concept addresses the crisis experience of the fall of the wall and its subsequent consequences. Feelings of worthlessness, apathy, nostalgic idealisation are manifestations of this crisis which then serves as a stepping stone to a new identity. There is a certain degree of comfort in the counselling session itself as the participants work through their past and towards the goal of the "reconstruction of the damaged personality" with the new capacity to act freely.

⁹⁶ Motikat, "Kirche ohne Konfessionslose?", 187.

progress will come neither easy nor fast. Stubborn staying power and a dogged determination will carry the day.

Therefore, the challenge for those seeking to be involved in church planting and evangelism in the former GDR is immense. It calls for a heightened awareness and interest in the history of the former GDR and an increased sensitivity to the vicissitudes of the biographies of many East German citizens. More diligence and greater emphasis on the work of contextualization of the Gospel is required. It is incumbent upon the church to enhance the capacity of its members in the area of religious dialogue, for Christian mission and for spiritual language.

Section II: Challenge of Youth

The rise of youth culture is an historical development, the result of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Industrialization demanded urbanization as jobs concentrated in urban areas, "shattering the sheltered world of the village, extended family and church." What was lost in the transition from rural to urban life was the spiritual and moral accountability and close-knit family units. With the advent of formal and mandatory public education primarily in the early and middle portions of the twentieth century, the increase of free time, financial resources and mobility, and the corresponding decrease in job responsibility for young people (the traditional farm hands were no longer necessary in the urban environment) and parental supervision lead invariably to the emergence of a separate and distinct youth culture.

Historically, three different cycles of youth ministry have been identified by Mark Senter. The Sunday School, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) can be viewed as the first wave of youth

⁹⁷ Mark H. Senter III, "A Historical Framework for Doing Youth Ministry," *Reaching a Generation for Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 107.

ministries, stepping into the spiritual vacuum left behind by the process of urbanization, depersonalization and anonymity, leaving families and congregations powerless and ineffective in providing ministries and programs appealing to young people. Starting in England, their greatest impact in the United States was felt between 1824 and 1975. The second wave or cycle of youth ministry can be identified between the years 1881 and 1925 with the establishment of ministries such as the Society for Christian Endeavor and other denominational initiatives. The third cycle of youth ministry was the Christian response to the public high school system with new agencies and ministries forming such as Young Life (1941), Youth for Christ/Campus Life (1945), and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (1954).

When talking about the youth culture today, the question quickly arises, "which youth culture?" In the United States a specific, definite youth culture is evident and sociologists distinguish between the generalized youth culture, also known as "mainstream" and a plethora of youth subcultures. The mainstream youth culture is considered to have been created primarily by the media-consumer industry which has dictated the interests and shaped the values of young people. However, the fragmentation of youth cultures in the recent decades has been a phenomenon within the youth culture phenomenon: sub-groups or sub-cultures of every shade imaginable, different homogenous units with distinctive styles, behaviors and interests. These are social groupings, or cliques, possessing their own cohesive identities with their own values, norms, lingo, fads and fashions, some consisting of class or ethnic distinctions that at times result in rival gangs. Membership to such distinct subcultures can be identified by tangible or intangible factors. Fashion, clothing, hairstyles and footwear are some of the

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⁹⁸ Senter, "A Historical Framework," 107-108.

⁹⁹ Roland Werner, "The 12/25 Challenge: Reaching the Youth Generation" (Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 52) in *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, vol. 2, ed. David Claydon (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 617-620.

tangible, outward signs whereas intangible elements include common interests, dialects and slang, music genres and gathering places. These factors offer young people an alternative identity outside traditional social institutions such as family, work, home and school. 100

Many youth-based subcultures can easily be associated and identified with specific music genres such as goths, punks or punk rockers, ravers, metalheads, hip hoppers, rappers, emo kids, Indie and Hippie. In some cases music has been the primary characteristic of the different groups. Other categories ¹⁰¹ might include skaters, jocks or athletes, cheerleaders, rednecks, geeks (either academic or computer), skinheads, boarders, greenies, preps, etc., which are bonded together by distinct principles, values, tribal mentalities ¹⁰² or even political perspectives. ¹⁰³

What is sociologically inherent in the mainstream youth culture and all the other subcultures subsumed by it is what some have referred to as the "generation gap." ¹⁰⁴ The youth culture is distinct from the adult world. Generational differences are identifiable which has tremendous implications for ministry.

The principles of inculturation mandate that the youth culture and its diverse subcultures "must be reached from within their particular culture rather than from

¹⁰⁰ Dick Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1979), 148.

¹⁰¹ George Barna, *Real Teens: A Contemporary Snapshot of Youth Culture*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 41-42. According to his research there are at least 20 different subcultures, with many teens belonging to more than one.

¹⁰² Dean Borgman, *When Kumbaya is Not Enough: A Practical Theology for Youth Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 75. In the words of some sociologists, elements of youth culture are as precious as the language, rituals, music and dance are to tribal societies.

¹⁰³ The political engagement or interest is of much greater significance in European youth scenes as opposed to the US. Most Europeans young people have a keen interest in the political landscape and are able to interact intelligently on this level. Certain sub-groups are internally bonded through political orientation, e.g. the "Nazis" vs. the "Leftists" ("die Linken") in the German context especially. The anarchists also build a rather significant grouping in the youth scene in Germany.

¹⁰⁴ Werner, "The 12/25 Challenge," 562.

without."¹⁰⁵ The incarnational model of youth ministry by which the youth worker enters the world of the young people must be the paradigm for effective, Jesus-like ministry. By becoming a human being, willingly emptying himself of divine prerogatives, ¹⁰⁶ Jesus took on the form and limitations of humanity in order to minister in close proximity and not from afar. In essence he became the first real missionary ¹⁰⁷ ministering cross-culturally. Since the various youth subcultures are distinct cultural entities in themselves, the ministry to youth is a cross-cultural, missionary endeavor. The natural consequence and challenge is that ministers to young people need to adopt the incarnational example of Christ and seek to translate the Gospel of Christ into the "language" of the youth in order that it can be easily understood and received.

Another factor to consider is that through the media and communication revolution the youth culture has become a global culture. Electronic and mass communication through music, film, television, computer and internet, as well as technological advances which are connecting telephone, computer, stereo into an interactive, multimedia system has advanced globalization. Outward appearances of young people seem identical in Bejing, China, in Bangkok, Thailand, in Berlin, Germany, in Sydney, Australia, in Cape Town, South Africa, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as well as in Cincinnati, Ohio, with a few cultural distinctives. These young people listen to the same music, watch the same movies, eat the same fast food, drink the same coffee, study the lives of international celebrities, dance to the music of Pink, sing with Justin Timberlake on their I-Pods, buy the most recent fashion items from H&M and shop in consumer temples, participate in virtual reality games, dating, and studies, interact with each other on www.myspace.com

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¹⁰⁵ Borgman, *Kumbaya*, 29. Borgman is referencing Pete Ward's book *Youth Culture and the Gospel* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1992).

¹⁰⁶ Kenosis of Phil. 2:6-11. Unless otherwise indicated all Biblical quotations are taken from the NIV Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1988).

¹⁰⁷ Werner, "The 12/25 Challenge," 566.

or www.facebook.com, or participate in the world-wide community of cyberspace with various blogs. It is an amazing, world-wide movement. Pop culture has captured the young person's imagination and has conquered the hearts and minds of impressionable young hearts and souls.

The global village is first visible and most prominent in the global youth culture from where it invades the other generations. Much of the international pop culture and media is driven by the young, bringing the various cultures of the world closer together.

An estimated one billion teenagers (thirteen to nineteen years of age) present the colossal challenge of youth ministry today, making up twenty-five percent of the world's population (more than half the population of the second and third world is under eighteen years of age). Some have called this segment of society the world's largest, the most dynamic and most crucial unreached peoples group.

It is incumbent upon the church to reach the young generation for Christ for several reasons. First of all, Jesus had a special place and a soft spot for the young and impressionable, explaining to his disciples that "the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these," and that "whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." He encouraged them "not to look down on one of these little ones." In addition, Jesus' anger is directed towards those who would lead a child astray.

Secondly, the word of God speaks clearly about the spiritual capacity of children and young people. The Psalmist reminds us that "from the lips of children and infants you

¹⁰⁸ Borgman, *Kumbaya*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4, 29.

 $^{^{110}}$ Mark 10:13-16; Matt 19:13-14. All biblical quotes are taken from the New International Version (NIV).

¹¹¹ Matt 18:5.

¹¹² Matt 18:10.

¹¹³ Mark 9:42; Matt 18:6.

have ordained praise, because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."¹¹⁴ The praises of the children will defeat the enemy. The prophet Joel foretold that "your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions."¹¹⁵

Scripture presents us with numerous young leaders, who were sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, who were effective in leadership and who were commended for their fulfillment of God-given tasks. Prominent figures such as Joseph, ¹¹⁶ Samuel, ¹¹⁷ King David, ¹¹⁸ King Josiah, ¹¹⁹ Queen Esther, ¹²⁰ Jeremiah, ¹²¹ Mary, ¹²² John Mark ¹²³ and Timothy ¹²⁴ were young in years when they received the call to minister or to fulfill an assignment for God. Not to forget is the example of a young Jesus interacting with the teachers in the temple courts of Jerusalem on the occasion of the Feast of the Passover. ¹²⁵ It becomes quickly apparent that God works in and through young people. Undoubtedly, there is vast biblical evidence for ministry to, with and for young people. According to the Bible, youth are not just recipients but also agents of ministry.

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¹¹⁴ Ps 8:2.

¹¹⁵ Joel 2:28.

¹¹⁶ Gen 37-50.

¹¹⁷ 1 Sam 3.

¹¹⁸ 1 Sam 17.

¹¹⁹ 2 Kgs 22:1-2.

¹²⁰ Esth 2.

¹²¹ Jer 1:6.

¹²² Luke 1:26-38.

¹²³ Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:37 – John was a helper to Paul and Barnabas.

¹²⁴ 1 Tim 4:12.

¹²⁵ Luke 2:41-52.

In addition, Child Evangelism Fellowship on its website indicates what has been known experientially for some time: that children and young people are the most receptive to the Gospel. Research has shown that around eighty-five percent of all believers accept Christ before they reach the age of fifteen. ¹²⁶ The window of opportunity is limited.

Thirdly, sociologically "youth are not only our hope for the future; they are a key to present development. They are always either a great liability (in terms of criminal justice costs, remediation, etc.) or an asset to any society." There are monumental challenges and dangers the young people of today are facing in a world that is changing at an increasingly faster pace with fewer moral guidelines. Uncertainties about their personal future and anxieties about the development of global crises situations in politics, ecology (e.g. global warming and dramatic overpopulation), economics (e.g. globalization and poverty) are factors. Broken families and social disintegration in society add to the confusion and consternation. To top it all off, the massive changes in all facets of their beings during their puberty phase as their biological clock thrust them inexorably toward adulthood. These are some of the issues and concerns facing not only the young generation but also the older ones as they attempt to help and guide and advise it.

That the church is called to minister to this youth generation is self-evident from the statements, stories and principles of the Bible. The question remains if the youth church concept provides a theological and ecclesiological answer to the great challenge of youth.

¹²⁶ Reese Kauffman, CEF Video online, Child Evangelism Fellowship, http://www.cefonline.com/ (accessed March 22, 2008).

¹²⁷ Borgman, Kumbaya, 4.

Section III: Youth Church Concept

The youth church concept is a fresh expression of church, an intentional approach of being and doing church within the youth-based subculture. Determining the age parameters for a youth church is difficult for cultures and societies define youth differently. Sociologically in Germany, the term youth has been extended to include people up to the age of thirty-five. Many youth churches minister to young adults, or what American churches would call college and career. For the sake of this study the age of a youth church is defined to be teenager age until mid- twenties.

Pete Leveson, the youth work coordinator for the London Baptist Association, in defining a youth church writes that it "is an attempt to inculturate the Gospel," and it "functions as a church within the structures and paradigms of a particular localised youth culture." Karsten Wolff, the founder of the first German church into the youth culture, KRAFTWERK – Dresden, has made the statement that every generation and every culture has the right to hear the Gospel in its own cultural context and language. Therefore, a youth church is basically a particular church for a particular homogenous unit for the sake of inculturating the Gospel into the youth culture raising the complex theological and missiological issue of contextualisation, the interplay between Gospel and culture which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

And yet youth churches claim to be real expressions of the global church of Christ.

They are not junior versions of the real thing, no training facilities preparing individuals

Pete Leveson. This quote is taken from an e-mail exchange with the author on December 19, 2007.

¹²⁹ Karsten Wolff quoted in Stephan Barthel. "Gemeinde in der Jugendkultur – Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der KRAFTWERK – Dresden Gemeinde." (Eine wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit – Freie Theologische Akademie, Giessen, 2002), 47.

¹³⁰ See the chapter below on Theological Review for treatment of this term.

for the future involvement in a real church, no church "wannabes." They want to be considered part and parcel of the global Body of Christ, fresh expressions of the true Church.

Marks of a Youth Church

There are certain distinguishing marks of youth churches that have been identified by several observers of the global youth church movement or new generation churches, such as Reinhold Scharnowski of Switzerland and Mark Lamport of the United States:

- Worship this is central to the youth church movement; it is electric, earnest,
 vibrant, participatory and active
- 2. Relationships and community the heavy emphasis on relational ministry is the key to successful ministry amongst the completely un-churched; cells or small groups are therefore not just another program of the church, but are considered the very foundation and the essence of the ministry
- 3. Incarnational the slogan "bring the church to the people" as opposed to bringing people to the churches reveals the determined mind-set of its leaders to be the church in the midst of the prevailing culture; by providing non-threatening activities and taking the holistic approach, meaningful relationships can be developed for the sake of the Gospel.
- 4. Internetional this is not a misprint but combines two facets of this movement into one word; there is a definite international dimension, a natural outflow of the Kingdom of God mentality, to this movement; this international dimension is aided by the Internet and World Wide Web; young people consider the internet theirs; it is their world; and through it they stay connected around the world; ministry leaders have taken advantage of this opportunity; at the same time the local challenge is not forgotten

- 5. Discipleship and action ministry leaders have no desire in providing entertainment for their young people; the emphasis on discipleship is unmistakable; there is an expectation of participation for everybody according to the well-known motto: "I do, you watch I do, you help You do, I help You do, I watch"
- 6. Radicalness there are real expectations for those who choose to follow

 Christ; the cost of discipleship is not hidden but the message of God's love
 and hope for his people is clearly presented in a language and style that can
 be understood by those outside of the realm of the ordinary Christian circles
- 7. Spontaneity this contrasts with traditional and liturgical worship services; as this quality is often associated with youth and since youth are the focus of the ministry it is no surprise that the youth services and other activities are marked by this quality
- 8. Empowerment the identifying, training and releasing of spiritual gifts for the edification of the body is a priority; young people are given the tools and the authority to be involved in all aspects of the life of the church; it is to be a church for youth and by youth; the leaders of the youth churches point out that the young people are not the future of the church; they are now the church, just as any other believer of any other age; the young people are encouraged to take ownership¹³¹

In reviewing these characteristics it becomes quickly apparent that all of them, with the exception of the fourth point, internetional, reflect the ministry and priorities of Jesus Christ himself. None of these emphases contradict the testimony of Scripture or the values exemplified by Christ.

¹³¹ Reinhold Scharnowski, "Gott Unter den Kids: Jugendkirchen – Modewelle oder Gemeinden für die Zukunft?," DAWN European Network, http://www.dawneurope.net/Gott_Kids.htm (accessed December 4, 2007) and Mark Lamport, "The Rise of Youth Churches." 14-15.

In reference to characteristic one, human beings were created to worship God.

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever," is the way the

Westminster divines expressed the main purpose of human beings. The entire testimony of

Scripture calls us to worship God the Creator.

Secondly, Jesus was a product of his culture which was strongly relational and communal. He lived and modeled it and instituted the New Testament church with a vision of an intensive and caring community, the distinctive mark of which was love, ¹³² the Great Commandment.

The third characteristic hearkens back to the last commandment Jesus gave to his disciples. It has become known as the Great Commission¹³³ and its missional force is expressed in the imperative "go." The incarnational model of the ministry of Jesus is the primary impulse to search and seek those without a witness, without a church, without hope and salvation. It provides the rationale for inculturating the Gospel of Christ.

The internetional focus, the fourth quality, is certainly part and parcel of the Great Commission. There is a global dimension to the evangelistic mandate which Jesus clarified several times during his earthly presence and which became dramatically evident during the missionary travels of the early disciples, especially those of the Apostle Paul. Only the second facet of the fourth characteristic, the internet dimension, was absent in Christ's ministry.

Discipleship, as the fifth distinctive, was an aspect so essential to the ministry of Jesus that it is impossible to think of Jesus without discipleship and vice-versa. The very nature of the relationship with Christ was discipleship. His best friends were called disciples and to be his friend meant to follow him.

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¹³² John 13: 34-35.

¹³³ Matt 28: 18-20.

The sixth feature is closely related to discipleship, for to follow Jesus implies radicalness. Bonhoeffer writes in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, "When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die." That is radical and that is what Christ requires of his disciples.

Spontaneity, the seventh quality, seems to be a modus operandi of the Spirit of God, "the wind blows where it wishes," even though there is no confusion or haphazardness in his actions. God is sovereign and he works out his plan without hindrance, resistance or delay. However, there is freedom in the Spirit of God and spontaneity is a divine playfulness given as a good gift to his people.

Finally, Jesus was in the business of empowerment, the eighth characteristic, and age seemed to be of little concern.

In reflecting on these characteristics of youth churches, there is nothing that would speak against the concept. All churches and all true believers in Christ ought to be characterized by these emphases.

Youth Congregation or Youth Church?

Even though more than one hundred other youth churches have been started in Germany since the year 2000, most of them are not youth church plants reaching the unchurched. Many are what British church leaders have coined youth congregations which are usually connected to a traditional church body but hold youth-only worship services. Some have a regional focus with several youth ministries of existing churches organizing a regular big event. The intent of youth congregations is to build a bridge

JOHN 3.0

¹³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), 99.

¹³⁵ John 3:8.

¹³⁶ Ulrich Schwab, professor of theology at the University of Munich., telephone interview by author, Berlin, Germany, October 4, 2005.

between the youth culture and the culture of the church and is considered by some to be a temporary solution for the young people until they have matured into adulthood.

The idea behind the concept of youth church, on the other hand, as evidenced by the case studies, is the realization that the church is not so much faced with a generational gap, but rather with a cultural gap. Hence a youth church is not designed to prepare and draw young people back into the existing church culture, which is an alien and vanishing reality. It reflects a sincere commitment to contextualization and to fresh expressions and new forms of being and doing church in a new cultural era.

That which sets the former GDR apart from other countries of western civilization is that the essence of this cultural gap does not consist of postmodernism¹³⁷ but atheism and a-religiosity. Not the revolutionary changes in the philosophical underpinnings of this postmodern challenge but rather the complete vacuity of religious thought in the overall mentality of the East German mind is the primary cultural frontier that needs to be crossed. The young people of the former GDR are growing up in this global culture but with the added ingredient of the a-religious worldview of their preceding generations. Therefore, the youth church concept is not viewed as "a bridging strategy, not a temporary holding camp where young people can be acclimated to existing church; it is not a bridge to the real thing." ¹³⁹ but a completely different way of doing and experiencing church.

Obviously the process of contextualization is complicated by the proliferation of youth subcultures and there is no easy answer to this challenge. However, the onus for

¹³⁷ Dr. Michael Herbst argues that post-modernism is a non-issue in East Germany today because there was no modernism. Even though it might be true that modernism was 'skipped', there seems to be evidence that many young people, without much reflection, have bought into western ideals and norms which would include the values and mindset of postmodernism.

¹³⁸ For most of the Western world the main challenge is the profound change in culture due to the rise of postmodernism. Young people are growing up in a vastly different culture than previous generations.

¹³⁹ Bishop Graham Cray in an address to the 3rd Academic Conference on Youth Ministry, Mansfield College, Oxford, January 1999. Quoted in Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 80.

making the Gospel understood still lies with the church. More creative tactics need to be devised in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

In conclusion, the devastating present spiritual condition of the former GDR combined with the rise and powerful presence of the youth culture, informed and driven by the processes of globalisation, the media and the information age provide a formidable challenge for the church in East Germany. The nascent concept of the youth church, creative, unconventional, bold and theologically inexperienced but with a drive and determination to be the church of Christ in today's culture, contextualizing the Gospel message, "honouring tradition while responding to social change," is one attempt to meet that challenge. Its theological and missiological soundness and its attempt at "critical contextualisation" is scrutinized in the following chapter.

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¹⁴⁰ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, with a foreword by Robert J. Schreiter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), x.

¹⁴¹ Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 171. Hiebert suggests that missionaries and theologians have responded in one of three ways in dealing with traditions in the past: 1. Denial of the Old: Rejection of Contextualisation; 2. Acceptance of the Old: Uncritical Contextualisation; 3. Dealing with the Old: Critical Contextualisation, 184-190.

CHAPTER 3

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Section I: Ecclesiology

For this research project the theological matter of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, is essential. Therefore, this chapter deals extensively with this subject and its relationship to missiology, culture and church leadership dividing the chapter into these four main sections.

The first section on ecclesiology is divided into three parts. First, and in order to remain biblically sound and to anchor this work in Scripture, our guide for faith and practice, a brief outline and overview of the biblical view of the church is given. Secondly, a theological discussion on the nature and purposes of the church with insights from various ecclesiastical traditions in history and a proper understanding of current trends will provide a helpful grid and context for evaluating the youth church concept. In recent years there has been a revived interest, an "ecclesiological renaissance" in this academic field. Reasons for this growing fascination can be found in the ecumenical movement, with its deep desire for Christian unity from a multitude of church traditions, the dramatic and rapid growth of Christianity outside the West with the resulting shifting of the center of the Christian world from the western to the southern hemisphere, ¹⁴³ and the rise of nontraditional forms and fresh expressions of church in the world. This third reason will also serve as the third part of this exploration into ecclesiology.

¹⁴² Veli-Matti Kärkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 7. In broad strokes the author summarizes the various ecclesiological traditions, analyzes various contemporary ecclesiologists and reviews several contextual ecclesiologies. The great diversity and extent of this topic are revealed in this helpful and systematic introduction.

¹⁴³ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford Press, 2002). Philip Jenkins makes the strong case that "we are currently living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide." The "global North" or western civilisation, with Christendom having been its major influence and force, is waning. "The center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America... The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning." p. 1-3.

The second section deals with the relationship between ecclesiology and missiology, taking a closer look at the controversial topic of the homogenous unit principle.

The interplay between the Gospel and culture, the challenge of contextualization, is the focus of the third section which leads into the fourth and final section of the highly significant issue of leadership within the church.

Part 1: A Brief Outline of the Biblical View of the Church

"The church is the community of all true believers for all time." ¹⁴⁴ This succinct definition of church includes all those who are truly saved, believers in both the New and Old Testament age, for whom Christ has given his life as Paul indicates when he writes: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." ¹⁴⁵ Not only did Christ lay down his life for her redemption, but he himself promises to build the church ¹⁴⁶ by calling his people to himself. This becomes clear when Luke reminds us that "the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." ¹⁴⁷ Its growth is not being accomplished by human hands or endeavor or ingenuity, but by the sovereign plan of God. To assure its ultimate triumph God the Father has made Jesus Christ his son the cornerstone of the church ¹⁴⁸ and has exalted him to be the head over the church, to a position of highest authority: "He has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." ¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. *An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 853.

¹⁴⁵ Eph 5:25.

¹⁴⁶ Matt 16:18.

¹⁴⁷ Acts 2:27.

¹⁴⁸ Eph 2:20 and 2 Pet 2:7.

¹⁴⁹ Eph 1:22-23.

The process by which Jesus Christ builds his church is already evident in the Old Testament. God calls unto Himself a people who come together forming an assembly for the purpose of worshipping the one true God. For example we find Moses telling the people what God had said to him: "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children." The Hebrew word for "assemble" (קהֹל) is translated in the Septuagint as ἐκκλησίαζω, "to summon an assembly" and is the verb form to the Greek New Testament noun ἐκκλησία, which is commonly translated into English as "church." This explains why some New Testament authors refer to the Old Testament people of Israel as an ἐκκλησία. In his speech to the Sanhedrin prior to his execution Stephen speaks of the people of Israel in the desert as "the ἐκκλησία in the desert." And again the author of Hebrews in quoting Jesus as saying "... in the presence of the ἐκκλησία I will sing your praises." ¹⁵¹

The Greek word έκκλησία, 152 then, means "gathering or assembly," and was employed almost exclusively for secular assemblies prior to the use by the New Testament. From έκ (out of) and καλέω (to call), it was the calling out of all citizens to attend to the discussion of public business and to deal with the public affairs of the city. The New Testament writers assumed this term and added a new spiritual dimension, the calling of individuals to join the ranks of the disciples of Jesus Christ. The disciples have been called out of the world to follow their new leader, the head of the church, even Jesus Christ. Thus the addition of τ ού θεού 153 or τ ού Χριστού 154 identifies it as the assembly of

¹⁵⁰ Deut 4:10.

¹⁵¹ Grudem, Systematic Theology, 853-854. Heb 2:12 quoting Ps 22:22.

¹⁵² Έκκλησία is the word used most frequently to translate the Old Testament term "an assembly, gathering or congregation" of God's people. But it was also the people called forth by God as the קהל יהוה (LXX = ἐκκλησία κΰριου). Έκκλησία translates קהל for times in the Septuagint and συναγωγή 37 times.

¹⁵³ 1 Cor 1:2.

those specifically belonging to God and Jesus Christ. What was at first a secular and worldly expression would now convey a distinctly Christian community with a worldwide claim. 155

In summarizing the usage of έκκλησία it appears that there are four basic meanings in the New Testament. First, it is referred to as a local gathering of believers (visible church: local) about forty times. Secondly, it is used to identify a collective number of professing Christians (visible church: general). Thirdly, there is indication that it was also used in a generic sense, i.e. of an institution (visible church: institution). Fourthly, έκκλησία, in its broadest sense, is the sum total of all believers (Invisible Church). The word church in its most comprehensive meaning signifies the whole body of the faithful, whether in heaven or on earth, who have been or shall be spiritually united to Christ as their Savior. It appears that in the New Testament, references can be found to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a small house cell group to including all believers the world over. Therefore any sized group at any place and at any level from the local to the universal may rightly be called "a church."

¹⁵⁴ Rom 16:16.

¹⁵⁵ K.L. Schmidt, "καλέω - έκκλησία." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol, 3, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 515.

¹⁵⁶ e.g. Acts 5:11.

¹⁵⁷ e.g. Acts 8:3; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6.

¹⁵⁸ e.g. Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 3:15; Jas 5:14.

¹⁵⁹ e.g. Eph 1:22; Col 1:18. R. J. Gore, Jr., *Outline of Systematic Theology*. (Unpublished Study Outlines).

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1938), 557. This use of the word is found primarily in the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians.

¹⁶¹ Rom 16:5 and 1 Cor 16:19 – a "house church" is called a "church;" 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1 and 1 Thess 1:1 – the church in a region is referred to as a "church;" Eph 5:25 – the church throughout the entire world can be referred to as "the church."

Part 2: A Theological Discussion on the Nature and Purposes of the Church

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, "the only King and Head of the Church... to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given by God the Father." ¹⁶²

Emil Brunner's question whether the New Testament έκκλησία, the community of Jesus Christ, is something new and distinct can be answered in the affirmative and the negative. What is neither new nor distinct is the fact that the έκκλησία consists of God's people, the elect, constituting all the people of God for all time, both Old and New Testament believers. Israel is the covenant people of the covenant God; as is the church. There is obvious continuity. ¹⁶³

However, there is also the dawning of a new era culminating in the cutting of the new covenant with and by Jesus Christ. Certainly, with his arrival in the incarnation and his complete ministry of redemption fulfilling the manifold prophecies and promises of the Messiah of the Old Testament, there is a new dimension to ἐκκλησία in the New Testament era, with new privileges and new blessings for the assembled people of God. For the ἐκκλησία of Jesus did not understand itself to be the "true Israel (like the Essenes and the Pharisees) within the false one, but the new Israel." ¹⁶⁴ It called forth the whole people of the promise to Abraham, not limited by race or nationality, to live out their faith in great anticipation of the eschatological hope. For Paul it was "the eschatological people of God that came into existence as the Christian church, as total community, and as worshipping assembly." ¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² The Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (Printed under the auspices of the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, 1976), The Form of Government, Ch. 1.A.1. (cf., Eph 1:20-23 and 4:15).

¹⁶³ Emil Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), 17.

¹⁶⁴ Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), 11.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 144.

Jeremiah anticipates and prophecies about this new covenant when he writes speaking for God, "The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time...I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts." The έκκλησία is aware that what was promised is being fulfilled, a new dimension has been revealed and has become reality. The assembled people of God are no longer subject to ceremonial or cultic laws. It no longer has racial or national divisions, for Gentiles are now welcome. The έκκλησία renounces every kind of theocratic pretensions as it now lives not under Jewish theocracy but under Roman Emperor and jurisprudence. 167

In answer to the above question, therefore, a continuity in the nature of the έκκλησία between both Testaments is maintained as the έκκλησία hearkens back to the Old Covenant, lives vibrantly in the present with the Spirit and eagerly anticipates and yearns for the consummation. In his great wisdom, God created human beings as social individuals, dependent on one another indicating that "God does not desire a history of individual men, but the history of the community of men." This history of the true people of the covenant of God, the fellowship of Jesus, "doubtless begins with the old covenant, but (which) attains full reality through the living presence of the Risen Lord." ¹⁶⁹

Invisible and Visible

The Westminster Confession of Faith, in the Calvinist theological tradition, makes a distinction between the visible and invisible church.

¹⁶⁷ Brunner, *Misunderstanding*, 20-22.

¹⁶⁶ Jer 31:31ff.

¹⁶⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Communion of Saints*, with a foreword by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), 52.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 24.

- Invisible: "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof." 170
- Visible: "The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." ¹⁷¹

Both Martin Luther and John Calvin insisted upon this distinction between the invisible and visible church, largely as a reaction over against the Roman Catholic teaching that only in its own visible organization could we find the one true church, the only true church. According to Roman Catholic theology and ecclesiology, "the Church was the one visible organization that had descended from the apostles in an unbroken line of succession through the bishops of the church." In disagreeing with this stance, both Luther and Calvin described the organization of the Roman Catholic Church as an empty, lifeless shell. "The idea of an infallible, hierarchical Church, and of a special priesthood, which dispenses salvation through the sacraments," was anathema to both Reformers. They held to the Church as the spiritual communion of those who believe in Christ, a communion of saints, a *communio sanctorum*. It is a mystical union with Christ to be sure, but it is a union nevertheless; a union with the spiritual body of Jesus Christ.

¹⁷⁰ The Standards, which includes the Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 25, 1. (cf., Eph 1:10, 22-23; 5:23, 27, 32; Col 1:18)

¹⁷¹ The Standards, Ch. 25, 2. (cf., 1 Cor 1:2, 12:12-13; Ps 2:8; Rev 7:9; Rom 15:9-12)

¹⁷² Grudem, Systematic Theology, 855.

¹⁷³ Berkhof, Sytematic Theology, 560.

¹⁷⁴ Indeed much of Calvin's and Luther's theological treatises and writings are in violent reaction to the vile corruptions and unnecessary excesses and abuses of the Roman Church. They are criticizing the entire religious system of the Catholic Church and exhorting the faithful to stay true to Scripture and its teachings.

This is the true expression of the invisible essence of the church, not the mere ritual or routine participation in external forms.

While upholding this distinction the Reformers maintained at the same time that "there are not two distinct churches existing side by side, but rather one church which has two parts, one visible to God and the other part visible to humanity." These are but only two aspects of the same church. "The invisible church is the church as God sees it... The visible church is the church as Christians on earth see it." The invisible church is the true church, consisting of all the elect of God, including those who have departed from this life, whose members have been the object of divine benevolence, grace and mercy, the focus of God's secret election and internal calling, for only "the Lord knows those who are his."

The danger of this dichotomy has been observed and identified by several theologians who believe the idea of an invisible church to be a misunderstanding of the biblical concept of the church. For Newbigin, "the whole core of biblical history is the story of the calling of a visible community to be God's own people." It is a society of human beings in the here and now, existing in this world, actual, concrete, corporeal and visible. The Church is not an abstract noun or an invisible platonic idea. Newbigin defends the concreteness of the church when he writes that "it is surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind Him was not a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life, but a visible community." 179

¹⁷⁵ Kärkäinen. An Introduction to Ecclesiology, 52.

¹⁷⁶ Grudem, Systematic Theology, 855-856.

¹⁷⁷ 1 Tim 2:19. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), 4.1.2; 282.

¹⁷⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1954), 20.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 20.

A possible resolution to the unnatural and forced distinction between the visible and invisible church is the eschatological perspective. It is a church on the move here on earth (visible), real, concrete, flesh and blood, but it also moves toward its final destination, to the aisle of the celestial church for the marriage ceremony with the Groom. It is at the final judgment, and only then, that the invisible church will ultimately come into full expression and being and when the invisible church, the true believers, the *communio sanctorum*, will become visible. ¹⁸⁰

An interesting observation when considering the nature of the church concerns the socio-economic, moral and educational make-up of the early church. According to Paul the people he refers to as the church of God, a lofty designation to be sure, are a rather uneducated, vile and sinful group, at least formerly so. He describes them as "not many...wise according to worldly standards, not many...powerful, not many...of noble birth." They were thus not quite members of the intellectual and economic upper class. Further into his letter Paul finds some rather unpleasant, sordid und distasteful descriptions when considering the former existence of the community of God members: the sexually immoral, idolaters, thieves, greedy, drunkards, etc. What made the difference was that these people now "...were washed...sanctified...justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." This is the reason why Paul could regard such a questionable lot, from the outward appearance, as the actual, real, vibrant community of God. Thus ἐκκλησία τού θεού was not primarily an "objectifiable sociological designation for Paul." He but rather a theological, spiritual expression of the

¹⁸⁰ cf. Jesus parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Matt 13:24-30.

¹⁸¹ 1 Cor 1:26ff.

¹⁸² 1 Cor 6:9ff.

¹⁸³ 1 Cor 6:11.

¹⁸⁴ Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 144.

essence of a group of people who had been touched, transformed and made new by God Himself.

Church Universal vs. Church Particular (Local)

In essence the church is a spiritual entity, conceived and created by God to work his salvation into this vast cloud of witnesses passing through the ages. It is universal for to it God calls individuals, both male and female, from all races, colors, backgrounds and corners of the globe. But this invisible, universal church was not meant to remain invisible. Only by belonging to a visible community of faith can the invisible reality of church become visible. This was God's design from the very beginning that the invisible Body of Christ would be made manifest to the world by the open, public gathering of believers, forming confessing communities to fulfill his mission. They are to administer the sacraments, preach the Word and make disciples. Thus the pattern was established immediately after Pentecost: individual believers were to gather into particular, local communities of faith. ¹⁸⁵

Militant and Triumphant

Military terminology is viewed very critically today especially in the realm of religion and this for good reasons. The Crusades of the past and the many instances of religiously motivated violence of any type in history or in the present are inexcusable and unwarranted. It would behoove the leaders of the Church therefore to take great caution and wisdom in the usage of such expressions. Nevertheless, the Bible is replete with images of warfare, battles, victories and defeats and a refusal to employ such imagery in a spiritual sense would be bowing to the Zeitgeist of our own overly sensitive and politically correct culture.

¹⁸⁵ Chuck Colson, *The Body* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 54.

The church on earth is the militant church engaged in spiritual warfare; the church in heaven is the triumphant church. There the sword is exchanged for the palm of victory, the battle cries are turned into songs of triumph and the cross is replaced by the crown. The strife is over, the battle is won and the saints reign with Christ forever and ever. The strife is over, the battle is won and the saints reign with Christ forever and ever.

While still on earth and living in the real world, the church of Christ is often not just a spiritually militant fellowship of believers but also the suffering church. ¹⁸⁸ This is a heartbreaking reality especially in the 20th century which has seen more martyrs lay their lives down for their faith in Christ than in all previous centuries combined. ¹⁸⁹ Precisely this sacrifice has been a powerful testimony to the strength and potency of faith in the One who has overcome suffering, pain, persecution, death and the cross.

The Church and the Kingdom of God

It is important that the two concepts are not confused or viewed as identical. "The Kingdom is the rule of God; the church is a society of men." The Kingdom of God is

¹⁸⁶ Berkhof. Systematic Theology, 565.

¹⁸⁷Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 565.

¹⁸⁸ In Roman Catholic theology, the suffering church is composed of those who are being prepared and purified of their remaining sins in purgatory for heaven.

¹⁸⁹ The Voice of the Martyrs Inc. (Canada), "FAQ – How many Christians are killed for their faith every year?," The Voice of the Martyrs Inc., http://www.persecution.net/faq.htm (accessed October 3, 2007). In the FAQ section the question is asked, "How many Christians are killed for their faith each year?" The response is: The persecution facing Christians is the largest "human rights" violation in today's world. According the World Evangelical Alliance, over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied fundamental human rights solely because of their faith. David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing in their "Missionmetrics 2007" report in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (Vol. 31, No. 1:32) estimate that approximately 173,000 Christians will have been martyred from mid-2006 to mid-2007. This represents an increase of 1.2% over last year and compares to 160,000 martyrs in mid-2000 and 34,400 at the beginning of the 20th century. If current trends continue, Barrett, Johnson and Crossing estimate that by 2025, an average of 210,000 Christians will be martyred annually;" cf. David Barrett and Todd Johnson, "World Christian Trends – Global Diagram 16: Evangelisation through Martyrdom," William Carey Library, http://www.gcts.edu/ockenga/globalchristianity/gd/gd16.pdf (accessed October 3, 2007).

¹⁹⁰ George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 111-119. "The Kingdom is primarily the dynamic reign or kingly rule of God, and, derivatively, the sphere in which the rule is experienced. In

primarily, but not exclusively, an eschatological concept. ¹⁹¹ The future reign of God has broken into the present for the Kingdom is "already" here, but it is "not yet" here fully. The church is the new community chosen by God to signal or point to the complete and final coming of the Kingdom. It is the community that shows the world what heaven and the Kingdom will look like. Therefore, the church is a testimonial community, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, called out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The Church as an Organism and Institution

Another distinction that can be made is between the church as an organism and the church as an institution, both of which are two aspects of the visible church but have their background in the invisible church.

For many theologians the relationship of these two realities of the church has been a real conundrum and the question what the church really is seems to have plagued especially the Protestant arm of the Church since the days of the Reformation. However, not even the Roman Catholic Church, which presents itself confidently and almost defiantly to the outside world, is immune to or exempt from this question. The real challenge for both is dealing with the apparent disparity between the $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\dot{\epsilon}\alpha$ of the apostolic age and the churches of our own age, leaving us with a strange feeling that something is not quite right with our church today. This has brought on various movements of reformation and transformation of the church as well as many other

biblical idiom, the Kingdom is not identified with its subjects. They are the people of God's rule who enter it, live under it, and are governed by it. The church is the community of the Kingdom but never the Kingdom itself. Jesus' disciples belong to the Kingdom as the Kingdom belongs to them; but they are not the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the rule of God; the church is a society of men." Ladd summarizes five specific aspects of the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the church:

- 1. The Church is not the Kingdom per se.
- 2. The Kingdom creates the Church, as people accepting Christ are joined to the saintly community.
- 3. The Church witnesses to the Kingdom.
- 4. The Church is the instrument of the Kingdom.
- 5. The Church is the custodian of the Kingdom.

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¹⁹¹ Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 568.

ecclesiological expressions throughout church history, the seeker-sensitive and Emergent church movement being two of the more well-known and much-discussed versions of the contemporary scene.

The problem seems to reside in "the ambiguous relationship between the New Testament έκκλησία and the institutional church known to history." ¹⁹² Is it a means to an end or the end in itself? Luther saw the problem early on and developed an aversion to the word church calling it an "obscure, ambiguous" term. He preferred the word "congregation" as he realized that the church is not an "it", a thing, an institution, but a unity of persons, a people, a communion. It would never have entered the mind of an apostle that the έκκλησία, the fellowship of Christian believers, the true people of the covenant, would have considered themselves a means to an end. The New Testament έκκλησία would have considered itself the body of Jesus Christ, a divine revelation and salvation in action and therefore not a means to an end but an end in itself. Brunner concludes that "the Catholics are right: the έκκλησία of the New Testament is no "external means of salvation" but the real thing. The Protestants are right; what the church has become as a matter of historical fact is not the real thing, but something which may very fittingly be understood as a means to an end." 193 He argues that what the church has in common is not an "it" or a thing, but a he. It has nothing of the character of an institution about it for it describes itself as the body of Christ, his fellowship, a pure communion of persons.

However, organization of people into functioning groups is unavoidable.

Structures need to be put in place for the sake of order and organization. This is obvious in both the Old and New Testament assemblies of God. Therefore, the church of God is both, an institution and an organism with a certain subordination of the one to the other: "the

¹⁹² Brunner, *Misunderstanding*, 15.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 10.

Church as an institution or organization is a means to an end, and this is found in the Church as an organism, the community of believers."¹⁹⁴

What is essential is the interrelatedness and vibrant interaction between Word and Spirit, the unity of the logos and the dynamic energy of the Spirit, especially in the ministry of evangelism and missions. Not just the passing down of traditions, but the very continuity of life, the life in the Spirit is indispensable.

The Marks of the Church

The question of what makes a church a church became a crucial question during the Reformation. What are the distinguishing characteristics that assist in identifying a true church? For the Reformers the marks were the right preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the sacraments. In the Augsburg Confession, the Lutheran statement of faith, the church is defined as "the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered." Similarly, John Calvin wrote, "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists."

In addition, Calvin emphasized correct faith and an upright Christian life more strictly than Luther, leading Calvin to a stronger interpretation and exercise of the role of discipline in the life of the church, elevating it to a significant mark of the church and devoting an entire chapter to it in his Institutes. ¹⁹⁷ Luther was willing to leave questions of behavior to the judgment of the individual's conscience.

¹⁹⁴ Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 567.

¹⁹⁵ *The Augsburg Confession*, trans. Rev. John E. Whitteker (Article 7 – "Of the Church") (Reading, PA: Pilger Publishing House, 1888), 41.

¹⁹⁶ Calvin. *Institutes* 4.1.9: 289.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 4.12; 452-471.

Some have called this the "church of fact" or the "church of faith." The factual church is messy, ambiguous and imperfect and has been likened to "Noah's ark: the stench inside would be unbearable if it weren't for the storm outside." Some have asked in an accusatory, others in a self-critical, tone what right the church has to speak of the very presence of God's reign in its midst when a survey of church history reveals its "shameful betrayal, cowardly compromise, and outright wickedness," 199 a community that at times has been sinful, weak, divided, and unsuccessful. In responding to this charge, the affirmation that the reign of God was present in Jesus Christ would consequently lead to the affirmation that it is also present in the community which bears his name, hidden at times to be sure, but revealed to eyes of faith. The church is still the beloved bride of Christ, the community of faith giving testimony to the risen life of the crucified Lord, and the place where the reign of God is actually present working out his plan of redemption in the midst of history, accomplishing the mission of Jesus. This affirmation is not made as an accurate reflection of the present condition or its past history, but as a confession of faith. His reign and presence is not due to any power or goodness of its own, but by the mercies and eternal designs of the Father having called and chosen the έκκλησία to fulfill his great commission on behalf of a lost humanity. The message of the church has and is not always clear and unequivocal, but the promise by Jesus, who said that he will build his church through all the failures and pettiness, the division and the discord, the frustrations and anxieties, the disappointments, pains and hurts, is a great comfort.

A discussion of the problem of sin is indispensable to an understanding of the fellowship of believers. It is the question of the *communio peccatorum* within the *sanctorum communio*. The empirical or visible church is the organized institution of

¹⁹⁸ Colson, *Body*, 59.

¹⁹⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 54.

salvation but it has no guarantee for the inner disposition of its members and must reckon with the good possibility of 'dead members.' The decisive element for the Lutheran concept of the church is that the *sanctorum communio* remains, as it always has been, a community of sinners. For the Reformed theologians, the church consists of covenant breakers but it is still the covenant people of God. These sinners or covenant breakers have been justified by Christ, they have been made new creatures and by the sacrament of baptism they have entered into the fellowship of believers. The life-long process of sanctification has been set in motion, the miracle of new life in Christ has indeed taken place and yet moral perfection remains an eschatological hope.

What can be affirmed with great confidence is that the Church has the presence of Christ on earth for it has his Word. It is the concrete, historical community of Christ and as such it can claim to possess the Holy Spirit which is the effective custodian of the Word of God and the sacraments. And yet it continually struggles against two sources: human imperfection and sin.

There is a cycle of communion with God being continually broken and then renewed and healed again. The sinful nature of Adam is still present in actuality even though it has been overcome in reality and in history. Sadly, the *communio peccatorum* does indeed live within the *sanctorum communio* as the spirit still battles the flesh in an individual believer. The process of sanctification is at work in both places, in the individual and in the corporate body. The Church is the communion of saints who are being sanctified by God.

The beauty of communion is often marred and corrupted in relationships. As each person is a sinner from birth²⁰¹ which is confirmed by the theological doctrine of original sin, therefore any human community, which is a collection of individuals, a fellowship of

²⁰⁰ Bonhoeffer, Communion of Saints, 145.

²⁰¹ Ps 51.

sinners, is never a community without sin. The Israelite community of the Old Testament and the New Testament churches bear this out repeatedly.

The church is not an unattainable ideal or one which is still to be attained, but it is a present reality. It is the church of God in every moment of history, not perfect and never attaining perfection within the bounds of history, remaining impure until the consummation, and yet always in actual form and in reality it is God's church.

Purposes of the Church

According to Wayne Grudem the purposes of the church can be summarized into three basic ministries: ministry to God, ministry to believers and ministry to the world. 202 Firstly, ministry to God is called worship, which is a way of life devoted to serving and glorifying God, "responding to him in adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication and obedient love." 203 It is the heartbeat of the Christian's life and a foretaste of heaven. Secondly, nurture is the ministry to believers, those who have come to faith in Christ and who have joined the membership of the community of God, building them up into maturity of the faith, "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Thirdly, ministry to the world is identified as the ministry of evangelism and service. Jesus gave his disciples the assignments to "make disciples of all nations" and to "love your neighbor as yourself." 206

One of the most well-known pastors of the world today is Rick Warren, who has made the purpose of the church his life's work and has expanded on these three purposes.

²⁰² Grudem, Systematic Theology, 867.

²⁰³ The Standards, which includes the Book of Worship, Ch. 1.

²⁰⁴ Col 1:28; Eph 4:13.

²⁰⁵ Matt 28:19-20.

²⁰⁶ Matt 22:37-40.

In his best-selling book *The Purpose-Driven Church*, he zeroes in on two great Scripture passages, the Great Commandment²⁰⁷ and the Great Commission.²⁰⁸ He writes that "a Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will grow a Great Church"²⁰⁹ and identifies 5 purposes for the church as being: worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism and service.

Warren emphasizes and encourages the need for a clear and well-defined purpose for the church. It builds morale, reduces frustration, defines what is done and what is left undone, allows concentration, attracts cooperation and assists in evaluation. ²¹⁰ Clearly defining the purposes of the church is not a job of creating them, for Jesus Christ, the head of the church, has already laid out his plans and established his purposes which are nonnegotiable. We are to discover them and put them into practice. ²¹¹

Warren calls

the church the greatest force on earth and the most magnificent concept ever created. It has survived abuse, horrifying persecution, and widespread neglect. Yet despite its faults (due to our sinfulness), it is still God's chosen instrument of blessing and has been for two thousand years. The Church will last for eternity and because it is God's instrument for ministry here on earth, it is truly the greatest force on the face of the earth. ²¹²

²⁰⁷ Matt 22:37-40.

²⁰⁸ Matt 28:19-20.

²⁰⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 102.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 85-94.

²¹¹ Ibid., 98. According to Warren, four questions ought to be asked in this significant process of writing an effective statement:

^{1.} Why does the church exist?

^{2.} What are we to be as a church? (Who and what are we?)

^{3.} What are we to do as a church? (What does God want done in the world?)

^{4.} How are we to do it?

²¹² Rick Warren, "The Church: the greatest force on Earth," Rick Warren.com, http://www.rickwarren.com/ (accessed October 4, 2007).

Church Government

Various forms of church government are utilized by different denominations. The Roman Catholic Church is essentially an absolute monarchy under the authority of a Pope. The Episcopal system is governed by bishops and archbishops with differing levels of regional authority. The Presbyterian churches are organized by presbyteries, which hold regional authority, and by synods or general assemblies, which hold national authority. Baptist and other independent churches make use of the congregational system of independency, which have no formal governing authority beyond the local congregation.

The Presbyterian form of government is preferable as it is derived from several general principles of the Scriptures with the "particulars determined by expediency and human wisdom." This is not to say that other forms of government are unbiblical.

Some form of church government is needed and desirable for order, organization and discipline so that the church can best perform its functions and ministries, although this is not a major doctrine.

Berkhof distinguishes between extraordinary and ordinary officers in the church. ²¹⁴ Extraordinary officers include apostle ²¹⁵, prophet ²¹⁶ and evangelist. ²¹⁷ Ordinary officers are elders ²¹⁸, teachers ²¹⁹ and deacons. ²²⁰

²¹³ Berkhof, *Sytematic Theology*, 581.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 585.

²¹⁵ Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13; Gal 1:1; Acts 1:21.

²¹⁶ Acts 11:28; 13:1-2; 1 Cor 12:10; 13:2; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 4:11.

²¹⁷ Acts 21:8; Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5.

²¹⁸ Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet 5:1, 2.

²¹⁹ Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 1:9.

²²⁰ Phil 1:1: 1 Tim 3:8-10, 12: Acts 6:1-6.

A helpful definition of a church officer is offered by Wayne Grudem who writes: "A church officer is someone who has been publicly recognized as having the right and responsibility to perform certain functions for the benefit of the whole church."²²¹

Unity of the Church

The unity and commonality of the church receives heavy emphasis in Scripture and therefore also in many systematic theology primers. The Psalmist glories in the unity of brothers²²² and Jesus himself prays for unity amongst the disciples²²³ and for all believers²²⁴ in his high-priestly prayer. Paul emphatically states that "there is one body and one Spirit,"²²⁵ and that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."²²⁶ The fellowship of believers is always a community that encourages mutual appreciation and respect for one another, including between generations. On the day of Pentecost the gift of tongues drew people together from many different nationalities²²⁸ to hear the one message of salvation in Christ which had ramifications for the first Christian church. There was unity amongst very diverse people, not without initial struggles as the encounter between Paul and Peter in Acts reveals.

The Nicene Creed of the fourth century reminds Christians everywhere that "we believe in **one**, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

²²¹ Grudem, Systematic Theology, 905.

²²² Ps 133.

²²³ John 17:11.

²²⁴ John 17:21-23.

²²⁵ Eph 4:4-6.

²²⁶ Gal 3:28.

²²⁷ Titus 2:2-8 and 1 Pet 5:5.

²²⁸ Acts 2:5-11.

Real or perceived differences, be they of cultural, economic, educational, age, ethnic, linguistic nature or anything else are no longer hindrances in the community of faith. The unity of the body of Christ is the theological norm. And yet history and our own experiences show that the norm often does not reflect reality.

Part 3: Fresh Expressions and Non-Traditional Forms of Church

There has been such a dramatic increase in the varieties of church globally over the last thirty years that the organizers of the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand, devoted an entire issue group to this world-wide phenomenon: its title "The Realities of the Changing Expressions of Church" with its findings published as "Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 43." With a shift from a static to a more dynamic understanding of Church, with the steady decline of the church of historical Christendom of the Western world in the twentieth century and with the onset of a postmodern culture, renewal movements have stimulated the developments of fresh expressions of church world-wide.

The modern mission movement endeavored to plant churches that looked much like the missionaries' churches back at home. Their failure in adequately contextualizing the Gospel and the church gave rise to indigenous movements which reflected their particular cultural context. However many of these local initiatives did not and do not belong to the churches of historical Christendom but developed into vital, vibrant new streams of ecclesial life flowing across the world. The issue group was able to identify

²²⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk and David Parker, "The Realities of the Changing Expressions of Church," in *A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call*, vol. 2, ed. David Claydon, (Pasadena, CA: Wm. Carey Library, 2005), 57-114.

several different forms of church emerging on several continents and developed a list in its report.²³⁰

It is always appropriate and even necessary to contextualize²³¹ church to maintain cultural relevance and be obedient to the incarnational paradigm of Jesus Christ himself. At the same time the task of faithful believers is to maintain the ecclesiological integrity of a true body of Christ, a community of saints who submit themselves to the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ, the head of the body,²³² and who are committed to each other for the purpose of worship to God, edification of the believers (discipleship and fellowship) and ministry to the world (evangelism, missions and service). The life-giving presence of Christ and the dynamic unity of the Holy Spirit cannot be absent from a genuine expression of church irrespective of locale, size, age, ethnicity, economics or any other kind of sociological category.

Emergent Church

A recent movement, primarily in the Western world, that is attempting to radically live out the above challenge is the Emergent Church movement and needs to be addressed here briefly under this heading of fresh expressions. "The church that is engaging with the

²³⁰ Shenk and Parker, "The Realities of the Changing Expressions of Church," 112. "This list is illustrative and suggestive rather than exhaustive and was compiled from various sources: Intentional communities, Base ecclesial communities, Followers of Jesus who remain within their community-family context yet are committed disciples, House churches, Café/pub church, Cell church, Cell-based/large scale church, Churches arising out of community initiatives (that arise from community projects or restructured existing churches), Multiple and midweek congregations, Network-focused churches, School-based and school-linked congregations, Seeker church, Purpose-driven church, Traditional church plants, Traditional forms of church that inspire new interest, "Ancient-Future" church: eclectic combining of traditional and contemporary elements, Alternative worship geared to a particular age group, Youth congregations: Generation-X within existing congregation; Student church; Emerging Church (post-congregational, deconstruction of previous forms of church), Church of the poor/marginalized, Dream or revelation-originated, Cyber church, Market place or company-based churches, Churches in prison."

²³¹ See Hiebert, *Insights*, 186. Hiebert calls this critical contextualisation over against the two opposing extremes which undermine the missions task: uncritical rejection or uncritical acceptance of old ways.

²³² Eph 4:15-16.

emerging culture"²³³ is the way Brian McLaren, one of the leaders of the Emergent Church, has defined this, at times, controversial movement. With buzzwords like humble orthodoxy, missional, postmodernism, deconstruction and reconstruction, the movement is attempting to inculturate the Gospel, "removing modern practices of Christianity, not the faith itself."234 It erupted in the 90's in the midst of the discussion on the subject of Generation X, but leading quickly to a shift "in focus from reaching a generation to larger issues related to being the Church in an emerging postmodern culture."²³⁵ There was an increasing realization that American society with its rapid process of secularization needed its own missiological agenda. Two theologians not involved in the movement but theological and missiological mentors to this movement, South African David Bosch and the Anglican Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, were not only concerned about missions in the traditional missionary fields, but recognized early and incisively that a missionary strategy needed to be developed in the post-Christian West. The Church was no longer existing amidst a Christendom mindset which was receptive, open and affirming to the Christian faith. Hence, the movement called into question the normal way of doing and being the church. The idea that American and Western believers needed to function as missionaries in their own cultures was becoming the focus of this movement and led to the term missional.

With the decline of Christendom and the radical secularization of Western culture, churches find themselves once again in a truly missionary situation reminiscent of the birth phase of the New Testament church. This has brought about a major paradigm shift in the thought world of theologians and pastors who have had to recognize that the

²³³ R. Alan Streett, "An Interview with Brian McLaren. *Criswell Theolgical Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 5-14.

²³⁴ Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 29.

²³⁵ Mark Driscoll, "A Pastoral Perspective on the Emergent Church." *Criswell Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 87-93.

separation of church from mission is theologically indefensible and that "a church which is not the church in mission is no church at all."²³⁶

The challenge today is once again "to bear witness to the Gospel from a position not of strength but of weakness." ²³⁷ The church today needs to re-learn the lessons of the early, primitive church: how to exist, survive and thrive in a culture resistant to, at best, and even hostile to the message of Christ. In a world which has rejected the Judea-Christian heritage with its value system, the church has been sidelined and marginalized. It can no longer swim with the cultural stream, which was based on traditional Christian values. Therefore, Christian beliefs, standards and methods need to be deconstructed and reconstructed (redefined and reshaped) to accommodate postmodern culture. It is the perceived influence of modernism on the church, its theology, structures, emphasis on buildings and programs, leadership philosophy, etc. and the church's cultural captivity to modernism to which Emerging churches are reacting.

It is the missional aspect of this movement that is of great interest and relevance to and holds the most appeal of the current ecclesiological situation in formerly East Germany; the perspective that the church and its members, having being marginalized and sidelined over several decades, needs to consider missions as its *raison d'etre*, its very reason for existence. It is of the essence that the community of faith plays the role of missionaries to a "foreign" culture within its own country, a culture emptied of its Judeo-Christian roots, history, content and values.

²³⁶ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 2.

²³⁷ Ibid., 6.

Part 4: Conclusion

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the discussion on the doctrine of the church would provide a helpful grid and context for evaluating the youth church concept.

A youth church is an έκκλησία, for the young people making up the youth church have been called out of the world to follow Jesus Christ. It is part of the invisible and the visible church, it is a member of the church universal and it is a church particular or local, it has been called to be the church militant alongside other churches doing spiritual battle against the Evil One and his minions, it expects to join the eschatological church triumphant one day, it is both an organism and an institution, enjoys both distinguishing marks of a church, the sacraments of baptism and communion, is not exempt from sin and thus exhibits the *communio peccatorum* living within the *sanctorum communion*, it seeks to fulfill the five purposes of the church and is in need of some sort of church government. In all these areas the youth church is indistinguishable from a multi-generational church. The youth church does demonstrate attributes of the emergent church in that it takes the task of contextualization very seriously, seeking to inculturate the Gospel of Christ into the youth culture. Especially in the East German context, where the church has been marginalized, the youth church understands its role to be missional in the sense that it recognizes its environment to be indifferent or even hostile to the message of Christ. It has been a long time since the former GDR can be described as being part of Christendom.

However, the one area in which the youth church concept falls short is in the profound ecclesiological principle of the unity of the church. It is here that the charge that "the youth church concept fits into the individualistic philosophy of market niche" is heard and the question is asked if sociological reasons suffice to legitimize this radical approach.

²³⁸ Lamport, "The Rise of Youth Churches," 16.

The criticism and controversy of the youth church concept is basically centered on the issue of mono-generationalism with two different foci: incompleteness and dependency.

- Incompleteness sociologically a youth church is limited to one generation.
 Theologically, the concentration and focus on one generation leaves the church truncated and is the poorer for it. Pragmatically, it does not solve the generation gap problem. It deals with it temporarily by separating the generations.
- Dependency financially a youth church is dependent on the mother church or some other supporting organization. This dependency also factors into the leadership issue.

The overview of the biblical view of the church, the theological treatment on the nature and purposes of the church and the exploration of the fresh expressions of the church have therefore raised one significant concern ecclesiologically regarding the youth church concept — the focus on one generation and with that the generational limitation.

The youth church concept appears to be ecclesiologically untenable.

Given this difficulty in endorsing an ecclesiological rationale for the youth church concept, is there a missiological argument that might trump the ecclesiological concern?

Section II: Ecclesiology and Missiology

That the Risen Christ brought a new dimension to the concept of έκκλησία was established earlier. He also brought a new urgency and a new vision. The community of believers confessing Christ as Lord was a movement launched into the public sphere by the Pentecostal power of the Spirit, claiming the allegiance of all peoples. The έκκλησία was not for private, personalized audiences. Instead it was meant for the world, for the public, open and inviting. What set this assembly apart was that it was not convened by the town clerk or some other person calling the meeting together. It was the έκκλησία

θεού, the assembly called by God. Persecution by the hands of the Roman Empire could have been averted had the έκκλησία been satisfied to have been considered a *cultus privatus* – one of the many forms of personal and private religion. But that is precisely what it was not. The simple, yet profound affirmation "Jesus is Lord" meant that Christ lays claim to all of life, for all peoples, at all times in all the world. There is a definite global and universal dimension to the people of God from the outset and the Christian mission is the task of bringing people of every tribe and nation and tongue to the throne of Christ in submission to him as they all express in unison "Jesus is Lord." This public, universal claim was bound to clash eventually with the *cultus publicus* of the empire, first the Roman and then whichever empire ruled the world or society at various stages of human history.

In reflecting on the relationship between ecclesiology and missiology it is of fundamental significance to get the sequence right. Christ, the head of the Church, the chief cornerstone is the foundation, the dynamic source of life and renewal. He is the One who in the incarnation revealed most powerfully and profoundly the heart of God for his creation and for humanity. He needs to be the focus and the center of our devotion, not the church itself, otherwise all sorts of distortions will result and spiritual vitality is lost. "A doctrine of the church that does not center on Christ is self-defeating and false." The mission of God, the *missio Dei*, 241 to redeem his world is still somewhat concealed in the Old Testament as it anticipates, awaits and prophecies about the coming of the Messiah

²³⁹ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 6-19.

²⁴⁰ Edmund Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 15.

²⁴¹ Missio Dei has been used or rather misused to refer to God's overall mission to the world in terms of social renewal with a concomitant minimization of evangelism. The World Council of Churches since the 1960's has had a preoccupation with social change. However, the understanding of the mission of God needs to be anchored in Scripture which evidences clearly God's desire for the nations to worship the one true God and his missionary efforts to accomplish this goal. Various biblical texts reveal God's heart for all peoples (Gen 12:1-3; Ps 67 and 96; Isa 45:6; Jer 3:17; Hag 2:7; Mal 1:11; Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 3:16; Acts 1:8; Rev 5:9). This missio Dei can only be achieved by the redemptive activity of His own son, Jesus Christ, who came "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). See John Stott's discussion in his book Christian Mission in the Modern World, pp. 17-20.

but is then openly revealed in the incarnation and publicly displayed on the brutal cross of Calvary. The message of the Bible centers in God the Savior who had to come in the person of Jesus Christ to bring salvation. Precisely this divine "salvation is God's mission to a lost world. God himself must come to bring salvation. This is the *missio Dei*." This *missio Dei* informs and instructs the nature and mission of the fellowship of believers. The sequence can be shown as Christology > Missiology > Ecclesiology which has led some theologians to articulate what has become known as missionary ecclesiology.

It could be argued that ecclesiology precedes missiology for in the Garden of Eden there was perfect and harmonious community between God and his created human beings and between Adam and Eve. This can be viewed as the first example of the *sanctorum communio*, the initial assembled people of God. Missions was superfluous in the pre-Fall world as the chief and highest end of man, "to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him forever," was firmly in place. That being the case, the question of sequence becomes a moot point. Only after the Fall, leading to this violent disruption of community, amongst other things, does mission develop into a major concern. In the words of John Piper, "missions exists because worship doesn't…..It is a temporary necessity." 244

Missionary ecclesiology holds that the essential nature of the church is missionary, rather than mission being *a task* given to the church.²⁴⁵ "It is not the Church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world."²⁴⁶

²⁴² Clowney, *The Church*, 158-159.

²⁴³ The Standards, which includes the Larger Cathecism, Question 1. p. 85.

²⁴⁴ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad. The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 11.

²⁴⁵ Kärkäinen, An Introduction to Ecclesiology, 151.

²⁴⁶ Tim Dearborn, *Beyond Duty: A Passion for Christ, A Heart for Mission* (MARC, 1998). Quoted in Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 85.

Newbigin insists that "mission belongs to the very being of the church" and again that "the church's mission is none other than the carrying on of the mission of Christ Himself." This is a reformulation of the words of Jesus expressed in his High-priestly prayer for his disciples, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world," and at his post-resurrection appearance commissioning his disciples "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me even so send I you." The Second Vatican Council affirmed the missionary character and nature of the church when it commenced the greatest of its documents, the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" with the magnificent words, "Christ is the light of humanity." Then, in the opening line of the first chapter of the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity," one reads that "the Church on earth is by its very nature missionary."

The church is on a mission to draw people from all over the world under one God into the fold of Christ and into communion with other believers. But what should never be ignored or forgotten is the realization that the profession of faith in Christ and his supremacy over all of life is not primarily or essentially a personal decision of any human being. In a mysterious way this has been laid hold of by Another who has commissioned his own to fulfil his mission. This mission is not ours, but is God's. "Mission arises primarily out of the nature not of the church but of God Himself." The God of the Bible

²⁴⁷ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 1.

²⁴⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *One Body, One Gospel, One World* (London: Wm. Carling & Co. Ltd, 1958), 17.

²⁴⁹ John 17:18.

²⁵⁰ John 20:21.

²⁵¹ Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, 1981 ed.* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1980), 350.

²⁵² Ibid., 814. Ad Gentes Divinitus (The Missionary Document of Vatican Council II).

²⁵³ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 21.

is a sending God who has sent his prophets, his Son and his Spirit. The well-known phrase that 'God only had one son and he made him to be a missionary' expresses the heart of God.

Key, "chosen not for privilege, but for responsibility."²⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, it is an inestimable privilege to belong to the ἐκκλησία with all the blessings of the Father as outlined for us in so many biblical passages. Matthew reminds us that "freely you have received, freely, give."²⁵⁵ The grand responsibility is to share this blessing with others so that the confession of Peter "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" which as Jesus reminds us is not the revelation of any human mind but is indeed a gift of the Father, ²⁵⁶ can be uttered as an authentic confession by men and women in all places of the world by all kinds of people in new cultural forms and in the tongue of their own culture. The challenge for the church is obedient participation in the action of the Spirit of God.

The church or the "pilgrim people of God" are on the move, proceeding inexorably toward the eschatological fulfilment of complete unity in Christ and participation with God in the new creation at the consummation of history, envisioning Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father and a sea of humanity worshipping before the throne of the Lamb.

²⁵⁴ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 19.

²⁵⁵ Matt 10:8.

²⁵⁶ Matt 16:16-17.

Homogenous Unit Principle

One of the most controversial church growth principles in the last quarter of a century is the "homogenous unit principle" (HUP) proposed by Donald McGavran, widely understood as the father of church growth, well-known missiologist and founder of the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary and the Institute of Church Growth. His context of ministry for thirty-three years was the Indian sub-continent with its caste system in the middle part of the past century. Observing the process of conversion and church growth within this cultural, religious and social context he noticed a pattern which he later developed into a church growth principle. McGavran's well-known statement is that "people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers."²⁵⁷ The assumption is that people reject the offer of salvation not so much out of theological reasons but rather due to social and cultural barriers. The thought that people have to reject their own cultural heritage and identity is a major factor in resisting the Gospel. What is even worse, especially in a communal or tribal setting, is the suggestion that to accept Christ is tantamount to betrayal of one's own people. Therefore a deep commitment on the part of the missionary or church planter needs to be made to contextualize the Gospel into the host culture. The church planted needs to reflect the culture of the homogenous unit.

McGavran defines a homogenous unit (HU) as "simply a section of society in which all members have some characteristic in common." The controversy does not center on the observable anthropological reality of this phenomenon for everybody belongs to such a unit or "subculture." The riches of cultural diversity, "the colorful

²⁵⁷ Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*. 3rd ed. (revised and edited by C. Peter Wagner). (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 163.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 69.

mosaic of the human race that God has created,"²⁵⁹ are to be celebrated and preserved. The question is rather "how the unity of the church and the diversity of cultures can be reconciled with one another?"²⁶⁰

What needs to be maintained is that any differences, no matter what kind, between members of the community of faith may never be a barrier to fellowship and worship.

Jesus Christ has abolished the "dividing wall of hostility" which includes all forms of hatred, scorn and disrespect between Christians in order "to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace." The new society is unified, a single new humanity.

Nevertheless, even the writers of the Lausanne document concede that "in many situations a homogenous unit church can be a legitimate and authentic church," without being complete. Peter Wagner adds that the HUP is "descriptive, not normative" and that it "should be regarded as a penultimate spiritual dynamic." It reflects certain sociological realities not Christian ideals. With growing maturity new believers and new churches are encouraged to take active steps out of isolation and towards a more diversified and multi-cultural local body of believers with an eschatological perspective of a new society that is here already.

²⁵⁹ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, "Lausanne Occasional Paper 1. Homogenous Unit Principle." Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, http://www.lausanne.org/pasadena-1977/lop-1.html (accessed October 9, 2007).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Eph 2:14.

²⁶² Eph 2:15.

²⁶³ "Lausanne Occasional Paper 1."

²⁶⁴ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate.* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 167-168.

Conclusion

The relationship between ecclesiology and missiology as outlined in Section II above can be interpreted to speak in favor of the youth church concept. As a matter of fact, practitioners of the youth church concept would heartily support the sequence of missiology preceding ecclesiology and thus prioritizing missiology over ecclesiology. This allows for missiology to determine and define ecclesiology and not vice-versa. Leaders of the youth church movement argue that the task of missions and reaching the lost supersedes any discussion on the doctrine of the church.

The Homogenous Unit Principle is a risky principle. But as was concluded in the review, a homogenous unit church can be a legitimate but not complete church. In other words, the youth church as an ultimate expression of the body of Christ, as a final product, is theologically and ecclesiologically not defensible for it truncates the body of Christ and limits it to one generation. The loss is dramatic for all generations. The young lose the wisdom, maturity, depth, experience, financial strength of the older generations. The older ones lose the dynamism, alacrity, vision, energy and vibrancy of the youth.

Missiologically, however, the youth church concept is a valid expression of the body of Christ, not as a final product but as a means to an end. Missiology precedes ecclesiology because missions is the essence of the church. Reaching the lost for Christ, the task of evangelism, obedience to the Great Commission exceeds in importance the doctrine of the church.

Section III: Church and Culture

The discussion on the homogenous unit principle leads into the midst of the perennial debate between the Gospel or Christ and culture, questioning "the relations of

Christianity and civilization."²⁶⁵ How does the Gospel of Christ affect culture? What are the implications of personal redemption in society? Is Christ interested only in personal piety or also in the sanctification of society?

It is helpful to begin this discussion by reflecting on the earliest stages of human life on earth as presented for us by the creation accounts in Genesis. What are the implications of God's great and awesome acts of creation? First and foremost we can affirm that all of creation belongs to God; He is the supreme Ruler of the universe and everything therein. All discussion, all reflection on the relationship between theology and culture must have this presupposition as its initial thought. Secondly, the created order was judged to be "very good" 266 by the Creator Himself.

God created man, male and female, and placed them within the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve began to create culture as they interacted with their surroundings, learned how to communicate, how to provide for themselves, how to live, how to design and utilize tools. Culture has been defined as "that total process of human activity," or "the total communication framework," by which the human being attempts to control his environment, to relate to his fellow human beings and to understand his place in this world. It thus has to do with values, world view and ideology. To quote Richard Niebuhr again, culture "comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organizations, inherited artifacts, technical processes and values." It becomes quickly apparent that when one talks about human beings in the plural one is at the same time talking about culture. The two are inseparable.

²⁶⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishing, 1951), 1.

²⁶⁶ Gen 1:31.

²⁶⁷ Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*, 32.

²⁶⁸ Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976, 1981), 42.

²⁶⁹ Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*, 32.

God created the human being and the human being expressed his gifts by creating culture. However, whereas God created the human being independently, ex nihilo as it were, the human being created his own culture as a dependent creature, interacting with the forces of nature, the vicissitudes and mysteries of life, and the sometimes irrational, inexplicable behavior of fellow human beings. God's influence on the life and development of culture is visible in the early pages of the Old Testament. In Genesis 1:26-28 we read about God's intention to create man in His image and to give him dominion over all the earth. The "cultural mandate" is instituted from the very inception of life, with man, as the pinnacle of God's creative exercise, being given supremacy to rule over God's creation. From the outset then, human beings have engaged nature and attempted to subdue and control his surroundings. In essence, culture was conceived, planned and instituted by God. Therefore, God is not just marginally interested in human culture but has a great deal invested in it.

The devastating incident of the fall of man with all of its theological, ²⁷⁰ anthropological, cultural and relational implications, recorded for us in Genesis 3, does not in any way diminish God's interest in culture. This becomes convincingly evident in the most amazing event of human history, the incarnation – God becoming flesh and completely identifying with his pinnacle of creation. God in Christ provides the basis for redemption of humankind in the atonement but also, and this is significant, for His world, as indicated by Paul when he writes that "the whole of creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." God's creation, living under the divine curse and "subjected to frustration", ²⁷² is longing in hope, in eager expectation for

²⁷⁰ The image of God, bestowed upon humankind at creation, was certainly marred or tarnished or injured, but in no wise was it removed. We are still God's creation but now in need of redemption, healing and restoration. There are, of course, several different theological positions on the image of God and what exactly was lost in the Fall.

²⁷¹ Rom 8:22.

²⁷² Rom 8:20.

complete redemption including restoration of culture as God had originally intended. And even though there is a definite eschatological element in this verse, all the promises of Christ were validated and ratified in the historic moment of his death and resurrection, and they are being fulfilled throughout human history. Hence the succinct statement of Niebuhr in describing the conversionist or transformationist viewpoint as "the Kingdom of God is transformed culture" is appropriate for God is in the business of transformation or redemption including culture, and Christ can be called the transformer or the redeemer of individuals and of culture.

Having established the all-encompassing nature of culture, it must be mentioned that the biblical authors lived in particular cultural settings and wrote out of these cultural backgrounds. Even the incarnation happened within a specific cultural setting. It did not occur cultureless for Jesus was born as a male Jew in a Greco-Roman world. There is no such thing as cultural immunity. God chose to reveal Himself *in* specific cultures but not *of* those cultures. Through these culturally-specific writers God communicated his trans-cultural plans and purposes. In fact, God brilliantly chose cultural customs of which the writers and first hearers of Scripture were familiar as backdrops for his divine intentions.

Thus in the Old Testament one is presented with a peculiar picture of God ratifying a covenant with Abraham.²⁷⁴ To the modern reader this is a bloody mess, but here God makes use of an ancient Near Eastern custom of treaty ratification. Moses, the author of this Pentateuchal book, was a man of that culture and employed such cultural and linguistic tools to communicate God's truth.

²⁷³ Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*, 228. In his classic, Niebuhr identifies five types in the "enduring problem" of the relationship between Christ and culture: Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox and Christ the transformer of culture.

²⁷⁴ Gen 15.

Similarly, New Testament authors employ their cultural surroundings to write God's thoughts. Their culture was highly influenced by Greek philosophy, Jewish religion and Roman politics and administration. John does not hesitate to draw from Greek vocabulary and philosophic insight such as *logos* and infuse it with new meaning. The terms *sophia*, *logos* and *gnosis* are prevalent in the writings of Paul, in which he attempts to deal with the difficult challenges of bringing the Gospel to bear upon various cultural practices. ²⁷⁵ Again Paul, in his speech to the Athenians on the Aeropagus, ²⁷⁶ uses their religious symbols to make his point regarding the Gospel.

In writing Scripture and thus using language as a means of communication, the authors are expressing thoughts immersed in their own culture. Not even Holy Writ is culture-less as God chooses to communicate His plans and purposes within culture, using cultural contexts and backgrounds. God used the surrounding cultures to communicate his message of hope. If biblical authors were aware of this or not cannot be ascertained, ²⁷⁷ but the task for believers in every age is to try to understand the original intent of what was communicated and attempt to make it understood in their particular culture. This is what Stephen Bevans calls "contextual theology...which takes into account: the spirit and message of the Gospel; the tradition of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologizing; and social change in that culture." This work of contextualization of theology is "the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context."

²⁷⁵ 1 Cor 10:23-33: Rom 14: Col 2:16: 1 Tim 4:3-4.

²⁷⁶ Acts 17:16-34.

²⁷⁷ I. Howard Marshall, "Culture and New Testament" in *Gospel & Culture*, 22. They were "prisoners of culture" just as any other human being is as well.

²⁷⁸ Bevans, *Models*, 1.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 1.

with reference to events, thought forms and culture. It lies at the very heart of the theological enterprise and is a "theological imperative."²⁸⁰

Bevans identifies five different models of interplay between Gospel and culture:

- 1. Translation model the emphasis lies on the unchanging message of the Gospel which is "supracultural;" there is an essential Gospel core or kernel "surrounded in a disposable, nonessential cultural husk;" culture plays a subordinate role in the process of contextualization and the Gospel is the judge of all cultures; divine revelation is propositional consisting of a supracultural unchanging message.
- 2. Anthropological model this model is found on the opposite end of the contextual spectrum with a presupposition that "human nature, and therefore human culture, is good, holy and valuable;" its primary concern is the preservation of cultural identity; the primacy of culture leads to the statement "context affects content;" the Gospel is influenced by the culture and must be newly discovered within that cultural context.
- 3. Praxis model as the term indicates, this model has a high commitment to reflective action towards social change, combining words and action in a dynamic process of transforming the world through participation in history; it understands "revelation as the presence of God in human history;"²⁸⁵ the

²⁸⁰ Bevans, *Models*, 10.

²⁸¹ Paul Hiebert, Cultural Anthropology, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), xvii.

²⁸² Bevans, *Models*, 33.

²⁸³ Ibid., 49.

²⁸⁴ Robert M. Brown, "The Rootedness of All Theology: Context Affects Content," *Christianity in Crisis* 37 (July 18, 1977): 170-74.

²⁸⁵ Bevans, *Models*, 68.

- emphasis is placed on 'ortho-praxy' (right acting) as opposed to 'ortho-doxy' (right thinking).²⁸⁶
- 4. Synthetic model it has also been called a "dialectical model" and seeks to synthesize and balance the insights of the other three models in acknowledging the integrity of the traditional message and the importance of culture and social change and encouraging a cultural dialogue.
- 5. Transcendental model the emphasis is laid "not so much that a particular theology is produced but that the theologian who is producing it operates as an authentic, converted subject;" it points to a new way of doing theology as activity and process, rather than as particular content.

The translation model was and is the accepted orthodox attempt at contextualizing the Gospel into culture for it deals most faithfully with the message of the Christian faith, maintaining its commitment to transforming each and every culture while accepting the good in culture. ²⁸⁹

The task of the Christian and the Church, therefore, is to identify the core of the Gospel (which is changeless, but the expression of it is never culture-less²⁹⁰) and make it understood in any given cultural context. The hearer of the Gospel needs to hear the essence of the message with the same force as the original hearers of the Old Testament or New Testament times did. That must mean that certain cultural forms are changed to

²⁸⁶ Bevans, *Models*, 65.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 83.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 97.

²⁸⁹ There are commendable and helpful aspects to each of the other models (such as the emphasis on action in the praxis model or the appreciation for culture in the anthropological model), especially as most flowed out of a reaction to the weaknesses of the translation model. To the extent that these aspects of the other various models do not compromise the essential core of the Gospel they can be incorporated into the model itself, strengthening it and making it more holistic in its approach to culture.

²⁹⁰ Marshall, "Culture and New Testament," 31. "What is certain is that the Gospel cannot be expressed apart from the categories of some culture; there is no such thing as a Gospel detachable from some cultural expression."

assure that people are dealt with in terms of their culture and that the actual meaning of God's revelation is understood in their context.²⁹¹ This process of cultural translation is referred to in missiological circles as contextualization or inculturation.²⁹² It is the incarnation of the Good News into another culture.²⁹³ It takes root and becomes part of the given culture and yet speaks prophetically to it. An intimate transformation of authentic cultural values takes place as the native culture and the Christian message integrate.

A special challenge is reserved for those ministering cross-culturally (be it in the jungle of the Amazon valley or the jungle of a Gothic youth culture in East Berlin) for they bring from the outside to a "fixed" culture something uncomfortable, unknown, unfamiliar. They upend the proverbial apple cart as it were as they challenge various cultural forms which are irreconcilable with the Gospel. The "cultural unconscious" needs to be made conscious, to be raised to the level of awareness, to help them think and reflect critically upon their own cultural assumptions. "Christianity is, therefore, always intrusive to a certain degree."

In his influential book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Paul Hiebert offers a helpful explanation on three basic responses to the cultural challenge. In dealing with the old ways of the host culture (e.g. old beliefs, rituals, stories, songs, customs, art, music, etc.) missionaries have a choice of three paths:

1. Denial of the Old: Rejection of Contextualization – the old ways are considered pagan and opposed to the Christian faith and are rejected wholesale; the

²⁹¹ See the discussion on "dynamic (or functional) equivalence vs. correspondence in form" in Charles Kraft's article "The Church in Culture: A Dynamic Equivalence Model" in *Gospel & Culture* (Pasadena, CA: Wm. Carey Library, 1979), 285-312.

²⁹² Inculturation as opposed to enculturation, which is a term used in sociology for the process by which the culture teaches an individual the norms and values of the culture or society. Inculturation historically is the term used by the Roman Catholic church; contextualization is preferred by evangelicals.

²⁹³ Schröder, *Konfessionslose erreichen*, 26.

²⁹⁴ Kraft, "The Church in Culture," 289.

problem is two-fold: it leaves a cultural vacuum that is often filled with imported cultural expressions and leads to the view that the Gospel is foreign which is ultimately rejected; secondly, the suppression of the old ways drives them underground.

- 2. Acceptance of the Old: Uncritical Contextualization without discretion the old ways are accepted based on the assumption of the anthropological model²⁹⁵ of theological contextualization that all cultural ways are basically good; the problem with the uncritical acceptance of the old is that it leaves the door wide open for syncretism and the loss of the uniqueness of the Gospel of Christ.
- 3. Dealing with the Old: Critical Contextualization a careful study and reflection of the old customs and beliefs is made and then evaluated in the light of biblical principles and norms; this process involves four steps: gathering of information about the old ways, studying biblical teachings about the event, evaluating the old in light of biblical teachings and creating a new contextualized Christian practice; this results in real, effective and biblical contextualization. ²⁹⁶

Critical contextualization²⁹⁷ is of the essence when engaging culture. That continues to be the challenge of the church, to interact with the surrounding culture in a critically reflective manner so as to allow our Lord to speak prophetically to it and transform it for the sake of the Kingdom.

²⁹⁵ Bevans, *Models*, 47-62.

²⁹⁶ Hiebert, *Insights*, 183-190.

²⁹⁷ Jason Bailey, "Mars Hill Men," *Christianity Today*, March 12, 2008, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/julyweb-only/127-52.0.html (accessed October 9, 2007). In facing the challenge of the culture, Mark Driscoll, pastor of the Mars Hill church in Seattle, advocates three responses to culture, which fall within Hiebert's third category of Critical Contextualisation: 1. Reject what is clearly sinful and unbiblical; 2. receive those aspects of culture which are part of common grace; 3. redeem those aspects of culture which are morally neutral, have been misused or abused and which can be redeemed for good.

In reflecting on the global youth context, leaders of the youth churches have a high degree of commitment to contextualizing the Gospel into the culture, the ethos, the Lebensgefühl (attitude and overall mood of life) of the youth generation. The reality is that many churches are not reaching the younger generation, especially those outside of the realm and reach of the church. Un-churched young people are entirely unfamiliar with the language, the music, the atmosphere of 'churchianity.' Some have described their experience stepping into a church service as a major culture shock. This is not a new problem and has been ascribed to the proverbial generation gap. And yet in the present accelerated age, with increased choices and freedom for the youth, the transitions from one generation to another seem to come at a quicker pace. Some sociologists suggest that a new generation is spawned every five to ten years while others maintain that "the changing of the guard in American culture"²⁹⁸ takes place every fifteen to twenty years. Whatever the length of time for the transitions, the generation gap is a sociological fact and needs to be taken into consideration. The bridging of this gap is the task of the church and the youth church concept is the radical attempt at making church meaningful and comprehensible for the younger generation.

However, as was pointed out in chapter two in defining and describing the youth church concept, the gap between the youth culture and the church culture is essentially not a generational but a cultural issue. Young people are growing up in an entirely different culture than previous generations. For the young people of the former GDR the path to the Christian faith and the church is bumpier and more twisted than for others, with the deeply ingrained a-religious and atheistic worldview informed by the Marxist-Leninist ideology of their parents and grandparents.

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²⁹⁸ George Barna, Real Teens (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 11-12. Barna argues that a generation cannot be five to ten years in breadth. The traditional span is approximately fifteen to twenty years.

Section IV: Church and Leadership

It is not difficult to find a plethora of definitions for leadership and for leaders. Surveying the shelves in book stores or looking at the various options on amazon.com, books on leadership abound. It seems that every institution and key leader has made a contribution to this topic. But the question remains: What is leadership? What defines a leader? "Leadership is the ability to bring prosperity to one's followers (Socrates)." ²⁹⁹ "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Peter Northouse)." "Leadership is the process of inspiring and empowering others (influence) to voluntarily commit themselves to achieving the leader's vision (Noe and Wright)." "Leadership is an art, something to be learned over time, not simply reading books. Leadership is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships and not amassing information (Max Dupree)." "The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers (Peter Drucker)." "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less (John Maxwell)." "Leadership is the process of persuasion and example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to take action that is in accord with the leader's purpose, or the shared purposes of all (John W.Gardner)." "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential (Warren Bennis)." The common themes that run through most of these definitions include vision, initiative and influence. But what is evident is that there are as many definitions as there are experts in the field of leadership. J.M. Burns, after having completed a meta-analysis on over 5000 studies, concluded that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth." Not since the 1800's was

²⁹⁹ Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after my own Heart* (Pre-publication manuscript, under contract for the NSBT Series: IVP-UK, 2004), 45.

³⁰⁰ Steve Klipowicz, "Advanced Leadership Concepts," (lecture series, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC, May 31-June 4, 2004).

leadership even defined as a term or a field of study. But in the last three decades there has been a veritable leadership explosion. Many leadership models and paradigms have evolved and been developed during this short time, images of leadership have been cinematically splashed onto the screens of our theaters and from there etched onto the screens of our minds, functions and styles of leadership thoroughly researched. From the thoughts of the secular field of leadership the church can and should learn. That is all good and well, but what distinguishes a Christian leader from a secular one? What makes Christian leadership unique? The answer can be found in the question, "Where is God in this?" That is what the church needs to ask and investigate to be able to formulate an appropriate theology of leadership.

Therefore, the church needs to open God's Word and wrestle with this issue of leadership from a biblical-theological perspective. Leadership in the Bible starts with God not with *Good to Great*, 301 with calling not charisma, with availability not ability, with character not capacity, with service not selfishness, with listening to God not to cultural expectations, with soft hearts not hardened souls, with humility not haughtiness, with emptying not egoism, with descending not ascending, with being a self-less vessel not a vain-seeking missile, with faith not fame, with generosity not greed, with humble repentance not deliberate defiance, with spiritual sensitivity not boastful arrogance, with an attitude of serving others not being served by others. The scriptural metaphors for leadership reflect these characteristics. Not that the leaders in the Old or New Testament always revealed such qualities, but inherent in the idea of biblical leadership are these concepts many of which have become topics of popular leadership books in the secular world.

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³⁰¹ Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why some companies make the leap...and others don't* (HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.: 2001).

The Bible, among many other books of spirituality, has become a source for many leadership principles even as modern culture has embarked on a spiritual journey with post-modern, eastern-oriented, pantheistic and secular/atheistic world-views. Many qualities espoused hearken back to divinely-inspired principles of life and leadership.

Jesus as Model

The Bible is replete with examples of leadership running the gamut from the excellent and godly all the way to the bad and egregiously evil. There are impressive, albeit still human, figures such as Moses, Deborah, Mordecai, Esther and King David and then sadly there are most of the other kings of the Old Testament who present a rather dark and corrupt picture of leadership. In the New Testament strong, visionary leaders such as the Apostle Paul can be found, but the prime example of leadership is undoubtedly the person of Jesus Christ. It should be the desire of every Christian leader to emulate not just His vision but His approach and style as well.

Therefore, the starting point when discussing a biblical-theological framework for the role of the Christian leader is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High, the Messiah. It is here where Leighton Ford in his book *Transforming Leadership* has made a profound contribution when he chose to look at Jesus as our primary example for effective leadership, as the paragon for a Christian leader. In the foreword to his book, Michael Green identifies Jesus as the greatest leader in the history of the world. He quotes Charles Lamb, "If Alexander the Great or Charlemagne or Napoleon were to come into the room, we would all stand up out of respect. If Jesus Christ walked in, we would fall on our faces in adoration." That is the difference.

³⁰² Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values and Empowering Change* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 11.

Ford addresses the various aspects of a leader who is dedicated to leading according to the priorities and principles of Jesus. He begins by discussing not the task of the leader but the person. The leader's identity as a child of God is the basis for leading Jesus-style. Even before Jesus had done a single thing to start his ministry God the Father blesses Jesus at his baptism by booming from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." Apparently God is much more interested in his being than his doing.

One of the most significant biblical designations for leaders is the shepherd. Rich shepherd imagery is evidenced in both testaments. In the New Testament all the Gospel writers make generous use of shepherding metaphors in describing Jesus. He embodies so well all the various facets and qualities of the traditional concept of shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd in John 10:11. He is the Seeking Shepherd in Luke 15. He is the Compassionate Shepherd of Matthew 4:23-24, but also the Royal Shepherd Judge of Matthew 25. In mixing metaphors and thus giving the pastoral imagery some of its most profound expressions, Jesus, the Model Shepherd, is depicted as the sacrificial lamb, the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world in John 1:29. The redemptive, expiatory nature of his mission attains its crystal-clear focus in these profound pictures. The ultimate shepherd-ruler-judge-king-priest humbles Himself and becomes the perfect lamb who sacrifices Himself to make atonement for our sins. This type of mixed metaphor reaches its climax in the book of Revelation where Jesus is depicted as the messianic Lion-Lamb. Much more eloquence in describing the King of kings and the Lord of lords is impossible. In Jesus the various strands of pastoral imagery produce a complete and profound picture of leadership.

³⁰³ Matt 3:17.

³⁰⁴ Ford, Transforming Leadership, 41.

Qualities and Qualifications

Turning now to the discussion of the core values or qualities of leadership the focus undoubtedly is placed squarely on the person of Jesus Christ once again. He has given us an exceptional example of what leadership entails. His very life exuded the principles and the characteristics of what the human heart is looking for in a leader. Not only did He lead others well but in the process of leading them he modeled leadership to them and transformed them as individuals and as leaders. The transformational leadership theory, which received quite a bit of attention as part of the "New Leadership" paradigm in the early 1980's, "is a process that changes and transforms individuals," both leader and follower. As opposed to transactional leadership theories, which focus primarily on the exchange dimension between the leader and their followers, "transformational leadership refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."306 Of all the various leadership approaches, the one that comes closest to the style of Jesus is this transformational leadership theory. As the result of the interaction between leader and follower, both are changed (Jesus obviously less than his followers) and transformed as it concerns itself with values, ethics, standards and long-term goals. The lives of the disciples were changed dramatically because they had spent time with their leader. The charismatic and visionary leadership of Jesus had a transformational impact on the disciples and through them on the ancient world of the early church. The transformational style defines the leadership approach of Jesus.

In addition, there is the passage in First Peter 5:1-6, which has been viewed as a classical statement of the values of leadership. It was written be the Apostle Peter, one of

³⁰⁵ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 131.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 132.

whom can be said clearly that he was transformed by Jesus and who took the solemn charge "feed my sheep," from his Savior-Lord seriously. 307 He writes here of such qualities as serving, caring, generosity, modeling and humility, all qualities which can be seen in the life, ministry and leadership of his mentor. These qualities are presented within the context of the imagery of shepherding the flock. Therefore, leaders of churches or "elders are called to be humble and willing under-shepherds of this Chief Shepherd's flock." 308

The core values that underlie the theology of leadership can be summarized by the four C's. If these are not present and active the life and ministry of the leader will succumb to temptation, frustration, resignation or even capitulation.

First, there is the value of *calling*. Os Guiness in his book *The Call* refocused several issues in relation to leadership, calling and personal mission. Guiness' distinction between primary and secondary calling³⁰⁹ is helpful. What matters most is that human beings have been called into a deeply personal and intimate relationship with the heavenly Father and awesome Creator. This is the foundation, the key building block upon which everything else rests. Expressed in another way, *being* precedes *doing*. Before one can start to go about the business of accomplishing his life mission and of becoming a significant leader, he needs to be anchored in the reality of his relationship with God. He needs "to be" in Him before he can proceed "to do" for Him. Leighton Ford, in exploring just this relationship of leadership and calling, dedicates an entire chapter entitled "The Leader as Son," of his book and opens up with "genuine leaders operate out of a sense of calling, not a sense of drivenness...Leadership is first of all not something one does but

³⁰⁷ John 21:15-17

³⁰⁸ Laniak, Shepherds after my own Heart, 216.

³⁰⁹ Os Guiness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), 31.

something one is."³¹⁰ It becomes obvious that calling and leadership are completely entwined and related concepts. One cannot have leadership without calling. They belong inseperately together.

It should be emphasized that beyond the primary and secondary calling for all Christians, to which Os Guiness refers in his book, there is a special divine calling for men and women to the task of effective Christian leadership for the community of faith.

Secondly, there is the value of *character* and integrity. The development of character qualities in His children is God's relentless quest. Woven throughout the fabric of the New Testament is His promise to conform us to His image. This is obviously meant for all believers. This then makes it all the more essential that leaders allow God to form, develop, chisel, shape them into reliable, strong, trustworthy, kind, godly, faithful, diligent, loving, courageous, disciplined, visionary, patient and obedient individuals. For it has been said that "ministry is a character profession." Leaders have been charged to lead by example.

Thirdly, leaders need to develop a certain level of *competence* in several areas in order that leadership is convincing. A leader needs to have vision and be able to communicate that to his followers. He also needs the ability to empower others. These require training and experience in the trenches. The key word here is 'to develop.' Leaders can be developed and trained in this area of competence. Obviously some will arrive on the stage of life with certain innate leadership traits and talents; gifts divinely bestowed and which predestine a person for leadership roles. Favorable genes and extensive potential, however, do not necessarily lead to effective Christian leadership. Other factors

³¹⁰ Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 37-38.

³¹¹ Rom 8:29; Eph 2:10; 2 Pet 1:5-7.

³¹² Source unknown.

come into play and it does require effort; hiding behind the excuse if incompetence or inability or fear is inexcusable. A certain level of competence is attainable.

Fourthly, there is the concept of community. Leadership takes place in community and for community. Leadership is often a lonely job, but it is never done in isolation. If there is no community of followers, leadership is superfluous. Out of the context of community and its needs leaders arise and are called upon to shepherd the flock.

Leadership Institutions in the Bible

The recent challenge by several Christian leaders to look to the Scriptures for insights into leadership rather than "baptizing" secular values and approaches from the business community and other social sciences such as psychology or sociology has precipitated some new research into and re-evaluation of the ancient categories of prophet, priest and king. These were the known and accepted designations and concepts for leadership in the cultures of the Ancient Near East, especially to be found in the Old Testament. All three functioned as "representative mediators' between the LORD and his covenant community." Priests mediated the presence of God, prophets mediated the Word of God and kings mediated the reign of God on this earth. Interesting is the fact that the most common description for a king in the Old Testament was 'shepherd,' who had the task of providing for and protecting his 'flock.'

Turning to the New Testament, the rich shepherd imagery and the functions of priest, prophet and king find their fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ who is the ultimate mediator between God the Father and the chosen people, the invisible church.

³¹³ Tim Laniak, "Biblical Foundations for Leadership" article in *Leadership in the 21st Century*, CD-ROM (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001), 2.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

Amazingly and inconceivably, Jesus passes this responsibility of the ministry of reconciliation on to his disciples. Therefore, believers in Christ, to a certain degree, inherit the functions of priest, prophet and king even though leaders in the New Testament are not identified as such. Designations for leaders in the New Testament church include apostles, prophets, evangelists and teaching pastors. The focus was cast onto the pastor, translated correctly as shepherd, and it is the pastor who became the central leader for the early congregation.

Gender, Culture, Hierarchy

Within the evangelical movement, the issue of gender has been most divisive.

Controversy has arisen around the questions of women's leadership, ordination and ministry. What should be kept in mind when discussing this hotly debated issue is that both sides, i.e. the complementarians and the egalitarians have a high view of Scripture, are committed to the apostolic traditions of the church and have a great love for God and His purposes. It is therefore important that people on both sides approach each other in brotherly and sisterly love and appreciation and respect for each other's theological positions. Room for discussion and debate needs to be granted but the atmosphere should be one of acceptance and love.

In terms of culture, leadership takes place within culture. Leadership affects culture just as much as culture affects leadership. It is a symbiotic relationship. Therefore it is important to understand culture in which one is called to leadership. Sensitivity to culture in any given leadership situation is essential for effective leadership. For example, a typical American "the-sky-is-the-limit" visionary approach in an East German culture would be inappropriate. The recipients and participants in former West Germany's

³¹⁵ 2 Cor 5:19-20.

³¹⁶ Eph 4:11.

Realpolitik (politics of reality) are not impressed by irresponsible and unrealistic fantasies. The real world of real challenges can indeed be changed, but this only by dependable, consistent and persistent effort rather than by grand, illusory chatter. Leadership in this setting, therefore, will look and feel differently. Adaptation of leadership to various cultural situations is essential. However, effective leaders will not be "passive receivers of culture...but cultural critics." The challenge is to understand the culture, to dissect and exegete it. Cultural changes in society need to be observed and an appropriate response applied.

One other aspect is the realization of the importance and impact of ecclesiology on leadership. How one views the church will determine one's leadership style and approach. One example is the discussion around the term 'hierarchy,' especially in the circles of the missional church movement. The emerging global cultural context with its values of egalitarianism and community has little patience for the hierarchical model of leadership. Thus some have attempted to completely flatten their organizational leadership style and "make a distinction between hier-archy and *heir*-archy....The organic approach is more to create heir-archies where you are all fellow heirs to the grace of God." 318

Historical movements and cultural idiosyncrasies need to be taken into consideration in leadership discussions. Sensitivity and adaptability to the respective culture are essential but not without limits. At times a critical and accurate assessment of culture will not lead to pure acceptance and submission to the culture but to creative and dialectical interaction and improvement of culture. Thus when considering the issue of ecclesiastical hierarchy or organizational structure, culture should inform but not finally

³¹⁷ Wayne Goodwin, "Summaries, Conclusions, Principles" article in *Leadership in the 21st Century*, CD-ROM (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001), 14.

³¹⁸ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 21.

determine the decision. God's plan and purposes should always supersede in questions of cultural adjustment.

For any system or body to work, some structure and organization is necessary. The question that remains is how structure can be adjusted to fit the cultural context without losing the Christian distinctives and priorities.

Formal and Invisible Dimensions

As mentioned above, leadership starts with *being* and not with *doing*. And precisely this vertical dimension of leadership has been ignored by the secular writers on leadership, who have had such a profound influence on even the Christian leadership circles in the last several decades. Wayne Goodwin makes a fine contribution to the discussion regarding the vertical vs. horizontal dimension of leadership when he identifies "three biblical images related to *being* (*the person of the leader*), *becoming* (*the formation of the leader*), and *doing* (*the functions and how-to's of the leader*) 'ortho-ontology, orthodoxy, ortho-praxis' as the elements of effective leadership which must be reconsidered in a 21st century evangelical paradigm for Christian leadership."³¹⁹

Goodwin's first element for Christian leadership is the image of being, or what he calls ortho-ontology. God's response to Moses at the burning bush when he asked whom shall I say sent me, was "I am who I am." This is a "metaphysical response, a vertical positioning and ontological image." Christian leaders have to escape the horizontal, human potential movement in the world of leadership and recover this vertical, metaphysical dimension of who the individual is in God as leaders.

En 3.1 1.

³¹⁹ Wayne Goodwin, "Biblical Paradigms for Christian Leadership" article in *Leadership in the 21*st *Century*, CD-ROM (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001), 8.

³²⁰ Ex 3:14.

³²¹ Goodwin, "Biblical Paradigms for Christian Leadership," 3.

Secondly, Goodwin moves from the *being* to the *becoming* dimension, or orthodoxy. This covers the areas of spiritual development and character formation of the leader. It must precede the *doing* aspect for to release a person into a responsible leadership position without adequate time for the shaping of godly character can be detrimental not only to the leader but also and especially to the followers.

The third image relates to the issue of competence or *doing*. Goodwin calls it ortho-praxis or primary doing. "Doing flows out of being and becoming."³²² This area deals with ethics, with behavior of practical activity in the arena of leadership. There needs to be a close relation between "private morality and public leadership,"³²³ with one of the primary challenges being not how leaders begin but how they finish. Integrity summarizes and defines this dimension well. A Christian leader without integrity is in the business of mis-leadership,³²⁴ a hazardous type of leadership devoid of ethics, morality and concern for the community.

Another element when discussing dimensions of leadership is the process of attaining leadership status. Some receive or are assigned a position of leadership; they fill some sort of leadership office (positional or ascribed leadership) but this in no wise guarantees or even implies effectiveness. Effective leadership flows out of a consistent, reliable, healthy, encouraging and releasing use of authority. In this case leadership is earned. Individuals therefore can rise to the occasion when a need in the community

³²² Goodwin, "Biblical Paradigms for Christian Leadership," 7.

³²³ Ibid., 6.

³²⁴ Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 13-48. The term and idea of mis-leadership was used by Heifetz in discussing various leadership theories who appear to be value-free. Placing Hitler alongside Ghandi or Lincoln on a list of leaders seems incongruous and compels us to look for a definition of leadership with a moral or ethical dimension.

(possibly a crisis such as was faced by Esther³²⁵) is ascertained and the incipient leader influences the community to face its problem. That is not to say that the needs of the world should set the agenda for ministry. For "need is a relentless and unforgiving slave master."³²⁶

With a divine calling, certain qualifications or a set of skills in hand, the necessary character and the pressing need from the community, a person can effectively lead without having an official position conferred. Obviously within the church setting, however, leaders who claim they have received an inward call should have this call ratified by the church's external call. From the testimony of Scripture we learn that effective leadership "is the result of a confluence between God's choice and human recognition." 327

Conclusion

The model for effective Christian leadership is the person of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the shepherding imagery of the Old Testament, Jesus calls us to be undershepherds with character and competence for the benefit of the faith community, the flock. To make him the focus and the object for emulation will provide a solid basis for operation. Biblical informed leaders have been called by God to be representative mediators between God and his creation – the presence of God, the Word of God and the reign of God on earth. Leadership is rooted in the very being of God and in His divine mission of reconciliation.

³²⁵ Tim Laniak discusses this role of crisis in the formation of a leader in his article "Esther: A Case Study in Crisis and Competence" in *Leadership in the 21st Century* (CD ROM) (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2001), 1-2.

³²⁶ Ray S. Anderson. *The Soul of Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 80.

³²⁷ Goodwin, "Summaries, Conclusions, Principles," 5.

The youth church concept is just as much in need of biblically-informed servant-leaders than any other type of church. Leaders arising out of different youth churches need to be trained and mentored to take on leadership roles for the sake of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN - METHODOLOGY

Oualitative Research

Qualitative research can be defined as a research method "attempting valid inferences from events outside the laboratory while at the same time retaining the goals of knowledge shared with laboratory science." It is an inquiry "to help us understand the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible." That individuals have constructed their own realities in their social contexts is an accepted sociological fact. To make sense of the meaning of those constructed realities and the experiences people have in the world is the desire of qualitative researchers.

Qualitative research is, therefore, a "non-laboratory social science methodology," known also as "naturalistic inquiry, interpretative research, field study, participant observation, inductive research, case study and ethnography," any terms of which can be used interchangeably.

In the minds of some quantitative researchers there still exists a certain lack of confidence in the qualitative approach to research for the methods of analysis are still being developed. Over against quantitative research dealing with hard numbers, statistics and well formulated methods of securing and analyzing data, some qualitative researchers still consider their approach an "art form" which can only be conducted intuitively.

³²⁸ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed., with a foreword by Donald T. Campbell (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), ix.

³²⁹ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 5.

³³⁰ Yin, Case Study Research, xi.

³³¹ Merriam, Qualitative Research, 5.

³³² Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*. 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 2.

Nevertheless, a flurry of recent activity, thinking, discussing, writing has brought about "methods that are credible, dependable and replicable in qualitative terms."³³³

As an umbrella concept qualitative research covers several forms – the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study. Recurring features of this type of research include:

- 1. *Emic*, or insider's perspective, versus the *etic*, or outsider's view. The researcher attempts to gain empathetic understanding "from the inside," from the participant's perspective, not the researcher's.
- 2. The researcher is the main "measurement device," the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- 3. It involves fieldwork, an intense and/or prolonged contact with a "field" or life situation with the intent of gaining a holistic overview of the context.
- 4. The primary research strategy is inductive in nature as opposed to deductive, building toward theory from observation, intuition, data collection and analysis
- 5. Most analysis is done with words producing a study that is richly descriptive and thick. Words, pictures and matrices are used rather than cold numbers.³³⁴

Case Study

For the purposes of this study the case study form was utilized. A case study is an empirical inquiry designed to gain deep insight into a specific situation or "phenomenon within its real-life context." Whereas an experiment deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context, as is done in quantitative research, a case study intentionally investigates all the contextual data and provides "intensive descriptions and

³³³ Miles and Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis, 2.

³³⁴ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 6-8; and Miles and Huberman. *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 5-7.

³³⁵ Yin, Case Study Research, 13.

analyses of a single unit or bounded system such as and individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community."³³⁶ It is this delimiting characteristic, the fencing in of the object of study, which defines case study research most precisely. The case is a unit, a single entity, singled out by concrete boundaries, "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context."³³⁷

In addition, qualitative case studies are defined and characterized as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic; particularistic in the sense that a case study has a particular focus on a situation, event, program or phenomenon; descriptive in the sense that the final analysis provides a rich, thick description of the phenomenon; and heuristic in the sense that it helps bring about discovery and learning. 338

At least five different applications can be identified for this approach: explain, describe, illustrate, explore or meta-evaluation (a study of an evaluation study). 339

Doing an exploratory study on the concept of youth churches in the East German context, in which very little research has been done and with only a few existing youth churches available for research, the only real option was utilizing the qualitative case study approach. Over against a single-case study, a multiple-case design, or comparative study, provides more compelling, robust and stronger analyses and results. Therefore the multiple-case design was chosen for this study, adding depth and breadth to data collection, bringing richness through triangulation, and contributing to the validity of the research. (See Appendix B – "Conceptual Framework – Multi-Case Research Chart").

For both the single-case and the multiple-case design there can be either a unitary unit or multiple units of analysis. In the qualitative research lingo these are referred to as

³³⁶ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 19.

³³⁷ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 25.

³³⁸ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 30.

³³⁹ Yin, Case Study Research, 15.

either "holistic" or "embedded" case studies.³⁴⁰ The crucial factor is the definition of the unit of analysis to be considered and studied. If there are subunits within a case, then the case study becomes an embedded study. For the phenomenon under investigation in this work what seemed to emerge as the most appropriate design is the multiple-case, holistic approach. Five different youth churches in the East German context which have been intentionally designed and planted were the focus for the qualitative research of this paper. The multiple cases were considered like multiple experiments and the "literal replication" logic utilized, in which each case basically provided similar results.³⁴¹

In summary, this is an exploratory case study, usually employed where considerable uncertainty exists about the phenomenon under investigation and no clear outcome can be ascertained, utilizing the multiple-case, holistic design with the literal replication logic. This exploratory study helps to identify questions to ask, issues to consider and measurement constructs to be selected and developed for the concept of youth churches in the most atheistic environment on the face of the earth.

Data Collection

Collecting the evidence is an essential step for conducting the case study. Data is basically any bits and pieces of information gathered from the context or environment of the case study. Merriam identifies three basic sources: interviews, observations and documents. Putting that into active language, data collection is the process of systematically "watching," "asking," and "reviewing." These various sources are highly

³⁴⁰ Yin, Case Study Research, 39-53.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 47. A literal replication logic predicts similar results as opposed to a theoretical replication which predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons.

³⁴² Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 69. Yin expands on those three and suggests a total of six sources: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. p. 85.

³⁴³ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 148. Merriam is drawing on H.F. Wolcott's terminology.

complementary and the quality of the research will be enhanced with the increase in number of sources used.

The most common form and the most important source of data collection is the interview. It is a basic mode of inquiry, allowing individuals to make use of language. Human beings have always relied on narratives to recount their experiences in an attempt to make sense of them. The ability to communicate and to think distinguishes us as human beings and is the most meaningful difference between the subjects of inquiry in qualitative and quantitative approach to research. 344

The purpose of the in-depth interview is not mainly to receive answers to the designated research questions, but primarily to gain deeper insight and holistic understanding the context of the case study, "the lived experience." It is a powerful way to catch a glimpse of the inside view of things. In addition, it strongly affirms the value of the interviewee and his/her perspective.

In-depth, unstructured interviews of several youth church planters (both over the phone and in person) captured some of the thoughts on religious life of the people of the former GDR, on Christian faith and the process of church planting in this environment. (See 'Appendix C: Case Study Protocol' for a sample of the case study questions). For example the interview with Alexander Garth, the planter of two youth churches for the Lutheran denomination – one in the rural area of the German state of Thuringia (Thüringen) and the other in a far-eastern district of Berlin, revealed deep and thought-provoking insight into the soul of the East German individual and his church's attempts at reaching him/her for Christ. The interviews provide well-rounded insight into the vision, life, values, strategies and philosophy of ministry of these attempts at making the Gospel

³⁴⁴ Irving Seidman. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 8.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 9.

culturally relevant and palatable for this age group. Time and effort was invested in looking at their history, financial handlings and denominational affiliations.

Interviews of a few other individuals who lived and ministered under the former GDR regime supplements the information gathered through literature research. The interview data was captured by audio-tape and by written notes. The data thus collected was analyzed and appropriate implications drawn for future youth church planting endeavors.

The source of data collection was not limited to the interview. Field visits were made to two of the five youth churches creating the opportunity for direct observation.

The obvious advantage of observing in the natural field setting is the first-hand encounter of the object of research.

The third recommended source for data collection, mining various documents for information, was utilized. Documentary information takes many different forms, such as printed materials, public records, personal documents and physical artifacts. For the sake of this study the documents reviewed were primarily reports of the youth churches (both external and internal), their vision and value statements, as well as one master's thesis paper on one particular youth church.

As mentioned above the use of multiple sources of evidence strengthens the conclusions of the case study. The most important advantage of this approach "is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation." Collecting information from various sources corroborates the same fact or phenomenon. Showing triangulation becomes important in the analyzing and final reporting of the findings of the research.

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³⁴⁶ Yin, Case Study Research, 98.

Standards for Qualitative Research, and Ethics

Invariably the question of quality, trustworthiness, authenticity and ethics will arise when a research project has been completed. Research conclusions can have real consequences for people which should be a reminder that ethical behavior in the entire process of the project is of utmost importance. However, even the best guidelines and regulations cannot guarantee an end product of ethical integrity. This burden lies squarely on the shoulders of the individual investigator.

Since qualitative studies are concerned with certain phenomena taking place in the real world with real people, researchers have the crucial task to produce reliable, valid, dependable, reasonable, confirmable, credible and useful knowledge in an ethical manner. Serious researchers would agree that shared standards are worth striving for to establish plausibility and ensure the quality of the research project.

To establish the quality of any social science research method, including case studies, four basic tests³⁴⁷ have been established and are commonly employed:

- Construct validity determines the operational and procedural correctness of the research project as such; three tactics can be used to enhance construct validity: multiple sources of evidence leading to triangulation, the establishment of a clear chain of evidence, and review of the draft case study report of key informants.³⁴⁸
- 2. Internal validity can also be called credibility and authenticity; deals with the question of "truth value" and congruency with reality; various strategies to increase internal validity are identical to the ones mentioned

³⁴⁷ Miles and Huberman suggest five main criteria to establish the "goodness" of qualitative work: the objectivity/confirmability; reliability/dependability/auditability; internal validity/credibility/authenticity; external validity/transferability/fittingness; and utilization/application/action orientation. p. 277-280.

³⁴⁸ Yin, Case Study Research, 35-36.

³⁴⁹ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 278.

- above along with long-term and repeated observation of the same phenomenon and clarifying the researcher's assumption and worldview at the outset of the study. 350
- External validity concerns itself with transferability to other contexts and generalizability beyond the immediate case study; making use of the replication logic in multiple-case studies is the most effective tool to improve external validity.
- 4. Reliability refers to the ability and the extent to which research findings can be repeated, demonstrating a reasonable consistency, stableness and dependability of the process; techniques used to ensure reliability are triangulation, leaving an audit trail and developing a case study database.

Construct Validity

In this study multiple sources of evidence were used: in-depth interviews, visits to two sites for observation and the reviewing of documents. Secondly, a clear chain of evidence was established in order for an external observer to trace logically the sequential steps taken from the initial research questions to the conclusions in the case study report and back. Thirdly, the draft case study reports were reviewed and approved by the key interviewees.

Internal Validity

In the attempt to attain internal validity, the same strategic steps as outlined above apply and were completed. In addition, due to the role as team leader for one of the youth churches researched, the writer had the chance to observe and reflect extensively on the inner workings of that particular case. His close relationship with the pastor of another

³⁵⁰ Merriam, Qualitative Research, 204-205.

youth church in close proximity to his own, allowed the writer to gain an extended, longterm perspective on that particular case as well.

The worldview and assumptions of the researcher were clearly stated at the outset of the project so that the potential problem of biases should have been dealt with adequately.

External Validity

Having researched five different youth churches in the East German context the results of the test of transferability or generalizability, utilizing the logic of replication, can be considered in a positive light.

Reliability

The techniques to ensure reliability were faithfully administered. The principle of triangulation in the process of data evaluation and analysis was carefully and methodically applied. A thorough case study data base was established and a case study protocol maintained in order for a potential auditor to repeat the procedures arriving at the same findings and conclusions.

Case Study Database

The careful selection of data is essential for a high-caliber qualitative research project. To increase the reliability of the entire case study, however, it is not only necessary to select the right kind of data, but also to create and maintain an organized, categorized and complete data base. The main objective is to make any and all documents and data easily retrievable and available for potential future investigators. It is

recommended that the data base consist of four components: notes, documents, tabular materials and narratives.³⁵¹

For this study, data was gathered, stored, organized and is available for later inspection and perusal. Pertinent research data come in the form of articles, interviews, websites, written documents from the various youth churches such as vision, mission, value statements, their distinct histories, their reasons for existence and many documented references to books and other resources recorded on note cards.

Case Study Protocol

As part of the data collection and selection process, a case study protocol is an extremely helpful and desirable tool, especially for multi-case projects, for several reasons. First, it increases the reliability of the case study. Secondly, it helps the researcher stay on target. Thirdly, potential problems can be better anticipated.

According to Yin, a case study protocol consists of four different sections: "an overview of the case study project, field procedures, case study questions, and a guide for the case study report." 352

For this multi-case research study, a case study protocol was prepared for each case study and is available for perusal as part of the case study data base.

Analysis of Case Study Evidence

It is unwise to wait for data analysis until the process of data collection is completed. Ideally the two processes interact with each other dynamically throughout the entire research project stimulating each other to an ever-increasing level of quality.

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³⁵¹ Yin, Case Study Research, 102.

³⁵² Ibid., 69.

The main objective of data analysis is "to extract meaning from the data,"³⁵³ and to show that the author's conclusion "makes sense."³⁵⁴

In order to achieve this goal it is essential that a general analytic strategy is chosen. Of the three strategies recommended by Yin, the preferred strategy is to rely and follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study in the first place. These propositions have shaped the entire case study on youth churches, from the case study design, to the formulation of the research questions to the literature review to the data collection process.

Once the general analytical strategy was in place, five specific techniques for analyzing case studies became relevant and could be used: "pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis." For the sake of this study each of the techniques was considered with the highest priority placed on pattern matching and the cross-case synthesis. As this is a multi-case study, "there are two stages of analysis – the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis." Stages of analysis – the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis.

Pattern Matching is a strategy in analyzing multiple cases in a cross-case analysis by which one case is studied in-depth. The successive cases are then researched and reviewed with the intent of discovering patterns or themes that cut across cases.³⁵⁸

The cross-case synthesis first of all treats each individual case study separately, the within case analysis, utilizing such tactics as "word tables." Later it attempts to

³⁵³ Merriam, Qualitative Research, 152.

³⁵⁴ W. A. Firestone, "Meaning in Method: The Rhetoric of Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Educational Researcher*, 1987, 19.

³⁵⁵ Yin, *Case Study Research*, 111-112. Yin explains two other analytic strategies: defining and testing rival explanations, and developing a case description. Merriam, on the other hand, selects six other data analysis strategies in his book: ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis, phenomenological analysis, constant comparative method, content analysis and analytical induction (p. 155-161).

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 109.

³⁵⁷ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 194.

³⁵⁸ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 174-175 and Yin, *Case Study Research*, 116.

synthesize the findings, looking for similarities in helping to identify if the separate cases can be divided into subgroups or categories of general cases.³⁶⁰

Writing Reports

The final step in the case study research project is reporting and disseminating the results. This exercise of writing proves to be a challenge for many researchers for it is "the point where rich data, careful analysis and lofty ideas meet the iron discipline of writing." Nevertheless, it is a task that needs to be done. Having designed the study, collected, analyzed and interpreted the pertinent data, the reporting brings closure to the project.

A good starting point for the process of composition is the determination of the audience. Targeting case study reports will assist in putting in written form the conclusions reached and the meaning generated from the research.

The most appropriate format for this multi-case study is the multiple-case report containing multiple narratives. Each case study will be presented as separate sections with the final section reserved for the cross-case analysis.

In terms of compositional structures, the linear-analytical³⁶² option was chosen. As the standard approach, it follows the basic structure of the case study design itself, starting with the statement of the issue or problem to be studied, leading into the literature review

³⁵⁹ Yin, *Case Study Research*, 134. A word table "displays data from the individual cases according to some uniform framework."

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 135.

³⁶¹ P. Woods, "New Songs Played Skillfully: Creativity and Technique in Writing Up Qualitative Research." In R.G. Burgess (ed.), *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods* (London: Falmer Press, 1985), 104.

³⁶² Yin, *Case Study Research*, 152. Yin suggests six alternatives: linear-analytic, comparative, chronological, theory-building, "suspense," and unsequenced structures.

and proceeding to the methodology. The collection and analysis of the data is followed by the conclusions drawn.

In conclusion a few writers on qualitative research suggest that even though there are general guidelines "writing the final report is much like the entire process of conducting a qualitative research study: it is as much an art as a science." With no "fixed formats" and "few shared canons" of how qualitative research is to be done at all, "the challenge is to combine theoretical elegance and credibility appropriately with the many ways social events can be described." 364

³⁶³ Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 245.

³⁶⁴ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 299.

CHAPTER 5

DATA DISPLAY AND ANALYSIS

This chapter forms the heart of the research project as the actual data of the multicase study is presented and analyzed. Five youth churches and/or youth ministries were investigated, researched and explored by the various methods introduced in chapter four such as in-depth, unstructured interviews, field visits and the mining of various documents including various reports about the youth churches and their own websites.

Each of the five case studies was analyzed internally in a within-case study analysis which was then followed by a cross-case analysis interpreting the evidence across the various cases in a second stage identifying the similarities and differences of the five youth churches. The major features include the following: vision and intentionality, leadership, passion, relationship, cell-based and contextualization all of which play a significant role in the planting and on-going ministry of these youth churches.

Case Study Number 1 – Jugendkirche Marzahn

General Information

- **♣** Name of youth church:
 - o Jugendkirche Marzahn
- ♣ Address of youth church:
 - o Tangermünder Str. 7 12627 Berlin
 - o Tel.: 030-9927 6510
 - o info@jugendkirche-marzahn.de
- **♣** Pastor, Leader or director of ministry:
 - Siegfried Steger

♣ Interview Partner:

This was not necessary as the author of this work was the founder and leader of this ministry for its first six years of existence (2000-2006).

Narrative – History

In the fall of 2000 a team of youth workers and church planters (7 full-time and 5 volunteers; Americans and Germans) began the process of planting a cell-based youth church in Marzahn, a far-eastern district of Berlin, Germany. Marzahn is located in a section of Germany which is thoroughly and convincingly atheistic (close to ninety percent in some areas) and which has been immunized against religion. Into this environment God called the team to plant a church.

After much prayer several extra-curricular activities were offered at various public schools in the area to be able to develop relationships with young people. Two team members coached a local youth basketball club team and started a high school team at a local school. Several members started a Gospel choir, led by a Christian professional gospel and jazz singer. Others started an after-school kids club at an elementary school. Later an English conversational club at another high school was established. The term H.O.T. was used to refer to an important strategy of the team: Hang-Out Time, during which various team members would establish and develop relationships with young people on "their turf," be it their schools, neighborhood play park or an athletic field. After the first two years the first young people actually accepted Christ into their lives and the first small group was established. Fellowship, food and fun were important ingredients in the small group, but so were vibrant worship and a serious look into the Scriptures. After the first year the group had grown to such a size that a cell multiplication process was necessary. At about the same time a monthly worship service on Sunday evenings was instituted which was increased to every two weeks shortly thereafter.

This was followed by another cell multiplication into five smaller groups and a move to a weekly Sunday evening worship service.

Due to several different circumstances almost the entire original team left Marzahn by the summer of 2006 and the new team leaders, Siggi and Lindsey Steger, took over the reins in the fall of 2006. Presently they are developing their own team to carry on this ministry.

Denominational Affiliation

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is a church planting project of the Lukas Gemeinde e.V. and its denomination, the Mühlheimer Verband freikirchlich-evangelischer Gemeinden (German free-church denomination) in partnership with Mission to the World, the missions arm of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). 365

Vision – Values – Goals – Strategy

The stated vision of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is "to win the young generation to become passionate followers of Jesus Christ." The dream and hope is that a multiplying, locally-led cell church movement for young people will change the spiritual climate in the district of Marzahn with a population of 150,000 people.

There is a strong conviction that a church should consist of cells in which intense discipleship and community is experienced. The intention is to plant churches by reaching the youth, leading them to Jesus and integrating them into the church. Realizing that these young people will mature and grow up to be adults, in due time this youth church will develop into a "normal" multi-generational church, which will have a positive effect on the spiritual climate of the entire district.

³⁶⁵ Other US missions agencies and churches have been involved on this team, such as members from World Witness, the missions arm of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and Antioch Ministries International of Waco, TX.

On its website the purpose statement and vision reads as follows:

We are a community of Christians seeking God, celebrating and serving Him. We desire to live in responsible relationships to each other marked by respect, love and trust.

Our goal is to create interest for the Christian faith and to reach nonbelievers and atheists with the Good News of Jesus Christ, providing an opportunity for them to receive the love of God.

As representatives of Jesus Christ we would like to make a positive contribution to the spiritual climate in Berlin, esp. in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, by committing ourselves to the people in this district, involving ourselves in relevant social activities, providing spiritual services and assisting other church planting efforts. All of this we hope to accomplish as partners with other youth organizations, churches and church planting projects. ³⁶⁶

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" "exists to provide various programs (e.g. creative, cultural, sports and spiritual activities) on the basis of Christian values to assist young people and young adults in their personal and spiritual development." ³⁶⁷

Its core values are summed up below:

Core Values

Small Groups

 The Small Group ministry is the heart of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" and the place where community life and growth happens.

o Community and Growth

• A loving community in which everyone is accepted, encouraged and in which each person's faith and gifts are cultivated.

Worship

• Vibrant worship is our ultimate life purpose and helps us to experience Jesus.

o Prayer

Prayer moves our hearts as we wait on God and it changes our environment

Evangelism

Sharing our faith occurs in our relationships

³⁶⁶ Jugendkirche Marzahn, "Purpose Statement of the Youth Church Marzahn," Jugendkirche Marzahn, http://english.jugendkirche-marzahn.de (accessed November 27, 2007).

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

Programming is geared towards young people and young adults between the ages of fourteen and thirty but everyone is invited and welcomed.

The goals are summarized on the website as well and include:

- To provide a perspective of hope for the future of young people through extracurricular activities, discussions, retreats and counselling
- To build up self-esteem and self-worth in young people
- To help develop their self-motivation and sense of personal responsibility
- To assist youth in developing skills in conflict resolution, especially in developing an attitude of acceptance and understanding between various races and nationalities
- To encourage the establishment and maintenance of inter-personal relationships and help young people develop a sense of social responsibility
- To provide free tutoring
- To communicate Christian values
- To encourage individual personality development
- To help in their discovery of gifts and talents
- To provide meaningful assistance in dealing critically with the media and youth culture³⁶⁸

Philosophy of Ministry - Theology and Ecclesiology

It is a well-known fact that church growth in Berlin, especially the eastern section, among adults is exceedingly slow. There have been some encouraging signs in the German-Russian ethnic scene, in which a couple of churches have grown quickly in the last several years. But church planting amongst the German people living in East Berlin has been a difficult and tedious process. For this reason, the deliberate decision was made to focus on young people.

The question the team asked itself was what must happen so that atheistic youth of East Berlin, who are still greatly influenced by their parents' atheistic philosophy, can become believers in and followers of Jesus Christ?

Here is an attempt to answer that question:

³⁶⁸ Jugendkirche Marzahn, "Purpose Statement of the Youth Church Marzahn," Jugendkirche Marzahn, http://english.jugendkirche-marzahn.de (accessed November 27, 2007).

- * "They must hear the Gospel in their culture
- * They need the examples of changed lives
- * They need the loving and inviting community of the body of believers
- * They need to experience God
- * Their old atheistic and materialistic worldview must die", 369

The programs were designed with an emphasis on relationships, community, personal discipleship and small groups. Weekly mid-week cell group meetings, which are seen as the heart of the church, are offered. During the cell meetings young people hang out together, prepare meals and eat together, worship God in song and in other creative ways, study the Bible, and pray and minister to one another. The sacrament of communion is practiced either in the cell or in the celebration worship services, which are held weekly. The sacrament of baptism is administered during these celebration cervices. One-on-one discipleship and mentoring is offered weekly.

In order to meet young people and build relationships, a variety of after-school extra-curricular activities such as a Gospel choir, basketball, English club, Kids' club, etc. are offered. Through these activities the chance to build relationships, which provide plenty of opportunities to share one's faith in God, is given.

The youth church concept is viewed as a bridge into the community, as a beachhead or an arrow, which can penetrate the hardened souls and hearts of a post-communistic mentality. It is a strategic measure, a temporary solution, a radical approach to reach this area for Christ.

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 $^{^{369}}$ Alexander Garth, a German Lutheran church planter of two churches into the youth culture in the former GDR.

Church Programs and Ministries

The heart of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is the weekly cell groups which meet in different homes.

The celebration worship services are held weekly in a central location to which all cell group members and their friends are invited.

General (extra-curricular) activities that have been offered in the past include:

- Sport (basketball, baseball, beach volleyball)
- Gospel Choir and Band
- Guitar courses
- Tutoring (German, English, Math)
- Youth events such as concerts, sport competitions, etc.
- Discussion groups about the basic doctrines of the Christian faith
- Retreats
- Excursions and trips
- Streetwork with kids and youth in the area
- Consultation with parents
- Working together with the schools
- Working together with projects of social service agencies and other youth clubs or church youth groups ³⁷⁰

Church Leadership Structure-Leadership development

The leadership of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is in the hands of the team leaders, Siggi and Lindsey Steger, who oversee a team of missionaries and volunteers. Since the church is not yet an established church, a board of deacons and elders have not been organized.

A couple of years ago the first leadership training seminar for small group leaders was offered and several young people participated. Today some of the small groups are being led by the young people themselves.

³⁷⁰ Jugendkirche Marzahn, "Purpose Statement of the Youth Church Marzahn," Jugendkirche Marzahn, http://english.jugendkirche-marzahn.de (accessed November 27, 2007).

Finances

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is financed through private donations and sponsors, primarily through the Lukas Gemeinde and the various missions agencies involved in the church planting project.

Statistical Information

• Church attendance: 25-30

• Church members: There is no official membership yet

• Number of new converts: 2/3 of the attenders are new converts; it is important not to attract people from other churches

• Number of baptisms: 14

• Number of small groups: 3

Due to the exodus of most of the team members within the last two years, attendance and ministry in general has suffered significantly, as reflected in the statistics. Fortunately, the most recent yearly report for the year 2007 indicates that things have stabilized.

Important dates in the life of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn":

2002

- The first three young people are baptized in the Lukas Gemeinde
- The first small group is started in the spring and is multiplied in the fall
- Monthly worship service starting in September

2003

- One baptism
- Two small groups
- Bi-weekly worship service starting in the spring

• First missions trip (to Macedonia)

2004

- Four baptisms
- Four small groups (one of those is for young adults)

2005

- Two baptisms
- Six small groups
- Weekly worship services starting in the summer
- The first leadership training seminar is offered

2006

- Four baptisms
- Five small groups
- Second missions trip (to Wales)

Additional Information – Stories

What has been most surprising is the continued staunch resistance to the Gospel of Christ. The realization that this is a constant, uphill battle, with little visible fruit is often hard to take. The amount of intensive prayer, fasting and prayer events, seeking God's face, investing in relationships, creative expressions of outreach and vibrant worship services have yielded very little results. God is most definitely in control and no one is willing or ready to give up. But the task is not easy.

The few conversion stories coming out of this ministry have kept the team encouraged. To be able to participate and observe the various baptismal ceremonies make the harshness of this ministry all worthwhile. Below is an article written by Kay Burklin reporting on the ministry of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn," entitled "Thanks for the Cookies."

"Thanks for the cookies' is all she needs to say.

Jeff Allers was in the courtyard of his building, hanging out with some boys playing basketball. He would shoot some hoops with them, and just sit and talk. His wife, Suzanne, watched from the window and wondered how she could join this group. Kinda hard and not a little-awkward as a non-basketball person.

One thing Suzanne can do is bake a mean cookie. She whipped up a batch and went down to the group of teenagers with a large plate of warm, yummy chocolate chip cookies. This precipitated the beginning of some relationships, especially with Anna and Marie. Jeff was already good friends with their brother, Thilo. Anna and Marie began hanging out with Suzanne, making cookies, playing Monopoly, talking about problems and boys and sharing their lives together.

Thilo became a Christian three years ago. Marie and Anna followed soon thereafter with decisions to follow Christ. It has been a joy to see how God has changed their lives and see them grow and mature in the Lord.

Marie recently wrote Suzanne a letter, thanking her for her presence in Berlin and how much it meant to her.

Dear Suzanne,

I want to thank for your coming into the courtyard three years ago. No one could have ever imagined how small homemade cookies could have such an impact on someone's life. **Some people might become fat, others might become addicted, but I came to Jesus**. And this was because of you. These past few years have been so wonderful. Without this relationship to Jesus, I'd still be a little girl without a future. I love to think about what you did for me...you have become a true friend to me. I love to spend time with you, and I'm excited to see what God will do in the future in our church.

Love, Marie

Thanks for the cookies. Thanks for the difference you have made in my life.

And thank you for introducing me to Jesus.

Wow - who wouldn't want to get a letter like this?

I need to run to the store. I need to get stuff to make cookies....."371

Summary and With-in Case Study Analysis

The strategy of pattern matching, by which one case is studied in-depth and the successive cases are then reviewed with the intent of discovering common patterns or themes, is the preferred strategy in the following summary and analysis of the different case studies.

Since the author of this research project was intimately involved in all of the phases of the planting of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn," the visioning, the planning, the team recruiting and team building, and since he was the team leader and pastor, it makes sense that this youth church plant provides the case study which is studied most in-depth. The other successive case studies will be compared to this one and common patterns and themes will be identified.

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is a deliberate attempt at contextualizing the Gospel of Christ into the youth scene of atheistic East Berlin. Already the name itself indicates that this is a church specifically for young people in the district of Marzahn. The definite focus on one specific generation in terms of style, atmosphere and overall approach to ministry, is both its distinct advantage and its ecclesiological Achilles heel. However, the well-known and documented fact of the stubborn resistance bordering on obstinacy and even outright hostility (although the most common response is a blasé indifference) towards anything religious of the people in their forties and above prompted this strategic attempt, an innovative solution of making church intelligible to the younger generation. This younger generation had no connection to spirituality or church, no meaningful access to the world of religion, most of them having never entered into a church building save for

³⁷¹ Kay Burklin, "Thanks for the Cookies." *Love Lines* (World Witness Publications, the missions arm of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 2005.)

the obligatory visit to a famous cathedral somewhere in Europe on a class trip.

Participation in a worship service was limited to a funeral or wedding of a distant friend or quasi-religious family member. Many had watched the televised funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, on September 6, 1997 or the memorial service of the more than one hundred people who died in the deadliest train wreck in history in Germany on June 3, 1998. But that was the extent of their exposure to any religious service.

To provide an avenue to Christian spirituality, to offer Christ for eternal salvation and the magnificent blessings associated with the fellowship of believers, the youth church was planted. Over the years God definitely used this approach to draw many young people to Christ and to gather an emerging church in the most atheistic environment globally.

Another factor entering into the thought processes of the leaders of the "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is the historic significance of the young generation for the transformation of a nation or culture. It is no secret that the enthusiasm and the impressionableness of the youth has always been the target of those who wanted to influence future generations. The church has seen the importance of training its young people in the fear and admonition of the Lord. As there are at least two or three generations absent in the church in the former GDR, the magnitude of reaching the youth was heightened dramatically.

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is part of God's great plan of redemption as it attaches itself to the long historical record of the $\dot{\epsilon}$ κκλησία. It is a small, but faithful bunch of young people belonging to the world-wide movement of the God of history, a local expression of the communion of saints.

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is still primarily a youth church but is in the process of transitioning to a church for young adults and young families.

³⁷² CNN, "High-speed train crash kills 100 in Germany," CNN, http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9806/03/germany.train.crash.2/ (accessed December 10, 2007).

Case Study Number 2 – Junge Kirche Berlin

General Information

- ♣ Name of youth church:
 - o Junge Kirche Berlin Berliner Stadtmission
- ♣ Address of youth church:
 - Junge Kirche Berlin Siegfriedshöfe Siegfriedstr. 204 b 10365 Berlin
 - o Tel.: 030/99 27 81 31
 - o <u>alexander.garth@junge-kirche-berlin.de</u>
- **♣** Pastor, Leader or director of ministry:
 - Alexander Garth
- **♣** Interview Partner:
 - o Alexander Garth

Narrative - History

The first Heartbeat worship service was held in June 2000. Prior to this event Pastor Alexander Garth, a Lutheran pastor from Sonneberg in South Thuringia, who had founded and successfully led a youth-oriented church in that community, was asked by the director of the Berliner Stadtmission, ³⁷³ Hans-Georg Filker, if he would be willing to start a ministry amongst the atheistic population of the far-eastern district of Hellersdorf. After much deliberation, prayer and a visit to Berlin, Alexander Garth, his family (wife and one son) and four young adults from his Sonneberg church moved to Hellersdorf in the summer of 1999 to start the church planting effort of the "Junge Kirche Berlin."

The first months were invested in apartment and job searches for the young adult team members and much prayer. Garth offered his services to teach religion at some of the

³⁷³ The Berliner Stadtmission is a ministry of the Evangelical Church (EKD) of Berlin-Brandenburg that was founded in 1877 based on the verse in Jeremiah 29:7, "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city...Pray to the Lord for it." The three main foci are mission/evangelism, service with emphasis on the poor and church ministry.

local schools, natural relationships were begun with neighbors, job colleagues and young people through youth activities such as volleyball.

Then in the summer of 2000 the church was officially launched with the first worship service in the local Lutheran church on Sunday night. Very quickly attendance grew at the monthly high-energy, multi-media, and creative worship services called 'Heartbeat.' It was known for its contagious contemporary worship music and for relevant, evangelistic sermons by the effective preacher/pastor/church planter Alexander Garth. The other three Sunday evening services were smaller in size and meant for more intensive biblical instruction. Small groups were also started at the same time, usually meeting immediately after the worship service as not to overextend the schedule of the young people.

A Christmas worship service organized and held in the middle of a local shopping mall gave much publicity early in their ministry. It was a store front in this mall that became home of this church plant providing valuable visibility for the next four years. The creativity, the quality and the enthusiasm of the team was the foundation of the early success.

After four years in the mall and with expansion needs, the decision was made to move the church to a more central location of Berlin, the district of Lichtenberg. Attenders were no longer coming just from the one district and a number of young people had moved more to the center of Berlin for their new found jobs or university studies. Since the spring of 2006 this is now the place of the "Junge Kirche Berlin," providing a home of hope and love for the members of the most effective church plant in all of Berlin.

Denominational Affiliation

The "Junge Kirche Berlin" is a church plant of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Berliner Stadtmission.

Vision – Values – Goals – Strategy

The vision of the "Junge Kirche Berlin" is to be a "growing, vibrant and radiating church." Initially it was designed to be a church for the younger generation, a youth church of sorts, for the atheistic young people of Hellersdorf. After the first five years it has expanded to be a multi-generational church reaching all of Berlin, no longer limited to the immediate locale of one district or one generation. This is due to the biological realities of life, i.e. getting older, that the young people have invited some of their parents and older relatives and that the creative worship services have attracted people from other districts in Berlin.

The desire to reach the parents of the young people has not materialized to the surprise and disappointment of the leaders. Garth's experience in Sonneberg, Thuringia was different as many of the parents did indeed follow in the steps of their children toward Christ. In Sonneberg, Garth's home town, one-third of the parents of believing youth came to faith. In Berlin the percentage lies below ten percent. "The Gospel simply does not make sense" to an East German atheist.

The values of the church are rather simple, but profound in their simplicity:

- 1. Love God
- 2. Love people
- 3. Love life

This is the heartbeat of the church. To live and model a "passion for God and for the church" is what these values express. And since the "German society finds itself in a values swampland," it is exceedingly important to provide clear guidelines and values to a new generation. They have experienced that Jesus is real and that the power of his love is inspiring. He makes our lives valuable and meaningful. They have experienced that a life with God can release unbelievable powers for meaning, loving security, goodness and

creativity. Christianity is not a theory, much less an ideology. It means that the distant God has become our heavenly Father in Christ.

The church exists primarily for two reasons:

- 1. To share life with those who have met and experienced this wonderful God
- 2. To share the message of hope with those people who live without God, to give them the chance to discover for themselves that this God is real, that he loves them and desires to be in a relationship with them.

The reaching of non-believers, many of them still highly influenced by the communistic and atheistic worldview, is one of their main goals. The church and its pastor make use of their state-church denominational profile and attempt to combine elements from the state church and free-church traditions.

The initial strategy of making contacts was to develop relationships through school contacts, sports and other creative activities. This is still an immensely important approach to reaching the lost, but the church's ministry has expanded and developed into a network church which reaches the entire city of Berlin. "We evangelize in these networks," explains Garth the new evangelistic thrust of the "Junge Kirche Berlin." It is no longer a local church for just one district. Due to the easy mobility of the young generation and the superior city-wide public transport system, the great distances across the city is no great hindrance. Young people will travel to quality programs, such as creative worship services, Gospel choir concerts, innovative parties and several retreats.

Today it has a two-pronged strategy of making contacts, "like an eagle with two wings: utilizing the relational VIP approach," and using various means of publicity via the media, such as TV reports and advertising in movie theatres." This has helped in

³⁷⁴ Very Important Person – everybody in the church is encouraged to reach the closest people in their relational network, family and friends.

communicating the creative and outstanding ministry of this church to a wider audience.

Positive media attention is essential in this religious climate of atheistic darkness.

Another approach has been to use surveys. "We ask people to help us better understand them. Many are still so darkened in their atheism."

Philosophy of Ministry - Theology and Ecclesiology

The "Junge Kirche Berlin" is a church in the full sense of the theological and ecclesiological term. All the marks and the characteristics of the church are present except for the legal status. This is covered by the sponsoring agency, the Berliner Stadtmission.

Even though it was started as a youth church, it has now developed into a multi-generational church. The youth church concept is viewed as a strategic step for the initial phases of the church planting effort. It effectively utilizes the dynamic of youth which is especially important in the former East where "the Gospel of Christ simply is not understood." The middle-aged and older generations suffer from "religious sclerosis."

In addition, the old adage "if you want to reach everybody, you will reach nobody" holds true for missiological concerns as well. A clear focus on the type of person or group one wants to reach will define the vision and task.

The challenge of this concept is that a youth church tends to be too one-sided and exclusive. This exclusivity can lead to "a generational constriction of the Gospel and to an over-emphasis of feeling and experience." This plays into the hands of the post-modern mentality of today and is unhealthy. The other weakness is that the young people mature and grow up so that within ten years the next youth church needs to be planted.

³⁷⁵ Alexander Garth has planted two youth churches, one in Thuringia and the other in East Berlin. In Sonneberg, Thuringia one-third of the parents of young people accepting Christ followed their children in the decision. Only one-tenth of the parents in East Berlin did the same. The difference in the robustness of the atheism between the city and the country is astounding.

In terms of membership, the church has no membership list, just a church list.

Those who believe and are baptized belong. The division between who is "in" and who is "out" is rather porous as there are some who would like to be a part of the church but don't yet believe. The paradigm is not the traditional "believe-behave-belong" but rather the opposite, "belong-behave-believe." "Sociologically this is important," Garth says, "and so we define ourselves out from the middle," granting some freedom to the young person to define for himself if he belongs or not.

One major emphasis of the "Junge Kirche Berlin" and its pastor is the importance of making the Gospel relevant to the new youth culture. The process of inculturation is key: understanding the cultural dynamics and differentiating between the essence of the Gospel which is unchangeable and the cultural trappings which are not. This church has found an effective way of translating the message of salvation in Christ into the language of an atheistic young person in the completely secularized world of East Berlin. Garth points out that in order to understand the atheistic mindset of an East German "you have dig in" for "there is a major difference between the atheism in West Germany and the atheism in East Germany."

In terms of denominational cooperation, the "Junge Kirche Berlin" works together with many projects of the Berliner Stadtmission, with the local Evangelical Alliance and other organizations that have the Kingdom of God in view.

Church Programs and Ministries

Worship services are held each Sunday night with small groups following immediately thereafter. Various activities for young people, young adults, and young families are offered on a regular basis.

Several retreats with different emphases are planned and organized each year as a way to intensify the relationship to God and to each other.

Many opportunities to serve are provided so that the people are encouraged to use their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Discipleship happens in the small groups and through various training courses offered throughout the year.

Church Leadership Structure-Leadership development

Alexander Garth is the pastor and church planter of the "Junge Kirche Berlin" and the only paid staff. Around him is a leadership team that act as the elders of the church.

There are many areas of service where the members of the church can involve themselves in the ministry. Participation is strongly encouraged.

The goal is the "balanced spiritual self-sufficiency" of the individual in the church.

To become dependent on Christ and to mature in Christ is the desired outcome of the leadership development organized and led by the pastor. To that end leadership training sessions are planned and held and many resources made available to the participants.

Resources include books, tapes or CDs from well-known authors in leadership and church planting like Bill Hybels, Rick Warren and Dan Kimball.

The biggest challenge for Garth is the motivation of new believers to grow and develop into committed leaders. This is partly due to the difference between city and country mentality on numerous levels. Berlin represents the tougher ground spiritually, the more vulnerable and susceptible to the spirit of the city as opposed to the Spirit of God (i.e. the sexual morals) and offers more options or distractions.

Finances

The "Junge Kirche Berlin" funds itself through the tithing of its members. The donations cover the cost of the facilities and most of the ministries, but not the salary of the pastor. That is provided by the denomination.

Statistical Information³⁷⁶

Church attendance: 150-200

Church members: 80 – those committed to the ministry and/or small groups

Number of new converts: 70-80

Number of baptisms: 60

Number of small groups: 16

Additional Information – Stories

The hope and goal of Alexander Garth was to have a church of five hundred

people within the first five years. In Sonneberg between twenty and thirty young

people would turn to Christ per year and many would draw their parents into the

church and the faith. Garth underestimated the intransigence of atheism in Berlin.

He has also observed that many conversions are superficial and that he needs

to get tougher and clearer on discipleship.

To the question if he would do it again, there was a resounding yes. But he

would do one thing differently, "I would start in the middle of East Berlin, not in a

dying district" on the outer edge of Berlin.

Summary and With-in Case Study Analysis

Alexander Garth, the church planter and founding pastor of the "Junge Kirche

Berlin," a Lutheran pastor from Thuringia in the former GDR, set out to plant a church in

the atheistic context of urban Hellersdorf, a far-eastern district of Berlin. He and his team

of four young adults from Garth's first youth church made a strategic attempt of building

relationships with young people in their surroundings in order to share with them the

message of Christ.

³⁷⁶ Statistics from February 2006.

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In this the "Junge Kirche Berlin" is indistinguishable to the "Jugendkirche Marzahn." The strategic importance of the younger generation was realized. The church was built upon their youthful dynamism and zeal. The relative openness of this generation to the Gospel was seized, the opportunity for potential future transformation of this district was captured.

Probably due to Garth's own personal history in the former GDR, he has been able to speak effectively and convincingly as an insider to the fears, the hurts, the aspirations, the confusions of the East German mind. He comes as one of them, fully understanding their background and their mentality. The success of the ministry can be found in his leadership and his ability to make the message of Christ understood in the language of the atheistic East German young person.

The church has successfully transitioned into a multi-generational church reflecting the desire and heart of Garth who wants to build a church where sceptics and atheists can find meaningful relationships and answers to many of their questions. He wants to provide space for their spiritual progress and development.

The "Junge Kirche Berlin" is the most effective church plant in Berlin in the last several years, starting its ministry amongst the younger generation and transitioning effectively into a multi-generational church of all ages. It is still primarily a church of young people, but its contemporary and creative worship style have made it attractive to many others as well.

Case Study Number 3 – KRAFTWERK – Dresden

General Information

- ♣ Name of youth church:
 - o KRAFTWERK Dresden evangelische Freikirche e.V.
- **Address** of youth church:
 - o Rudolf-Leonhard-Str. 45 01097 Dresden Tel.: 0351/8012076

email: <u>office@Kraftwerkdd.com</u> URL: <u>www.kraftwerk-dresden.de</u>

- ♣ Pastor, Leader or director of ministry:
 - o Dierk Müller
- **♣** Interview Partner:
 - o Dierk Müller

Introductory Comment

The interview was done with the relatively new pastor of the KRAFTWERK Dresden church, Dierk Müller, who took over from the founding pastor and pioneer Karsten Wolff less than two years ago. During this time the church has been in a process of transition from "a youth church to a family church with a youth focus." The average age now lies between twenty-nine and thirty-two years. Many of the initial group of young people have grown up, some have married and now have children. The leadership team is in the midst of reformulating the vision, goals and values of the entire ministry. Some of the early emphases are being evaluated and re-considered. For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on the first decade of ministry with a few concluding remarks concerning the new direction and philosophy of ministry.

Narrative – History

In Germany the first church plant into the youth culture³⁷⁷ (Gemeinde in der Jugendkultur) is the "KRAFTWERK Dresden Evangelische Freikirche e.V." In the early days of 1995 a diverse group of young people began to come and live together in a community in a district of Dresden called Neustadt. It is a well-known neighborhood area with lots of clubs, pubs, local stores, cafes but also notorious for its share of social problems. Already during the last years of the former GDR, a distinct alternative subculture had emerged in this area, attracting bikers, musicians, students, freaks, artists and simple laborers.

Some of these young people had experienced God leading them to begin to read the Bible together and meet in fellowship groups to discuss the difference God was making and the impact he was having in their daily lives, as they were being released from drugs, other addictions and suicidal thoughts. As they grew in their faith, a deep desire for intimate fellowship developed: "an authentic community of faith" to which they could invite their friends and in which "they could live out their faith in a relevant way in their world."

To meet the needs of these young people, many coming from very broken homes and lives, an independent youth organization was launched in July 1995, "Christliches Jugendzentrum Dresden e.V." It was later renamed "KRAFTWERK Jugend- und Sozialarbeit (KJS) e.V." Financially and legally the social youth organization is separated from the church but both work together closely in ministry.

In May 1996 "KRAFTWERK – the Godly Pub" was opened, as a low-threshold contact-making and counseling center for those in need. It also served as an evangelistic

³⁷⁷ Stephan Barthel, "Gemeinde in der Jugendkultur – Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Kraftwerk Gemeinde Dresden." (Eine wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit – Freie Theologische Akademie, Giessen, 2002), 21.

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entrance point for the very un-churched of the area. These were precursors to the actual church plant.

The official founding of the free church "KRAFTWERK Dresden Evangelische Freikirche e.V." occurred on July 7th of 1997 and the facilities of the pub were used for the worship services until March 1998. The rapid growth of the members and visitors of the church necessitated a move to an old munitions factory in the industrial part of North Dresden. The building was renovated to a multi-purpose youth center serving the ministry as its worship center, recording studio and venue for various events such as concerts and parties. In March 2002 membership had risen to 115 and the weekly Sunday evening worship services attracted up to 300 guests, most of them of the younger generation. The estimated average age for members was 27 years and for worship attenders about 24 years. Two-thirds of the members have become believers through the ministry of "KRAFTWERK Dresden."

Since the new leadership in 2006, the emphasis has changed not just in terms of age, from a youth church towards a family church, but also in terms of philosophy of ministry. According to the new pastor Dierk Müller, the leadership team realized that "we as a church no longer do justice to the title of 'youth church' for we mainly have young families with little children." From "our way of thinking, today we are a family church with a focus on youth."

Whereas the thrust of the initial ministry was penetration into the emerging postmodern culture in the Western world, with the leaders joining, at least in spirit, the Emergent Church movement, today's leaders view this movement with a bit of "critical distance." The concern and danger is "to sacrifice the Gospel on the altar of cultural relevance." To be culturally relevant is a high value of the new leadership but without compromising the historically orthodox faith, for "the Gospel is unchanging."

Denominational Affiliation

The "KRAFTWERK Dresden" church has no denominational affiliation but views itself in the evangelical and charismatic tradition with a strong commitment to cooperation with other local churches for the sake of the Kingdom of God. It is an active member of the Evangelical Alliance.

Vision – Values – Goals – Strategy

As was mentioned above, the church is in a state of transition and the vision, values, goals and strategies are being reformulated. It is a work in progress and thus cannot be utilized for our study.

Therefore, the vision and values documents for the first decade of ministry will serve as the basis of the research and evaluation of this youth church.

The stated dream of the "KRAFTWERK Dresden" church is to be "a church which helps people to become passionate disciples of the dangerous, unpredictable, living Jesus of Nazareth." They want to be a church which builds bridges to seekers, those who have lost their bearings; to comfort and console those who mourn, to heal up the brokenhearted, to help those in need, to provide a safe community for the oppressed, the disillusioned and those who have been forgotten and exist on the fringe.

Their dream extends beyond their own city of Dresden. Their prayer and hope is that God would release a Jesus Revolution in Dresden that has ramifications for all of Germany and Europe and that would establish the Kingdom of God in every realm of society and culture.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ Kraftwerk Dresden, "Unsere Vision als Church," Kraftwerk Dresden, http://www.kraftwerk-dresden.de/index.php?id=22 (accessed December 4, 2007).

³⁷⁹ Barthel, "Gemeinde in der Jugendkultur," 30.

The idea of planting a church into the youth culture is a radical attempt to communicate the love of God primarily to the younger generation in a relevant, comprehensible manner. The pivotal issue is cultural relevance.

In terms of values, prayer is to be the heartbeat of the church. Cell groups form the basis of the ministry as young people are developed into committed disciples of Christ. With the multiplication of disciples and leaders comes the multiplication of these cell groups. The new leaders are to be trained for the edification of their own church, for the planting of other churches and for the task of missions.

The Great Commission motivates, inspires and shapes the philosophy of ministry and can be summarized in five key slogans: go out, bring in, provide a home, heal, send out. The values for the ministry are as follows: authenticity, responsibility, creativity, quality, passion. 380

Philosophy of Ministry - Theology and Ecclesiology

As was mentioned above, the "KRAFTWERK - Dresden" youth church has a real concern for cross-cultural ministry. It is a thrust into the existing youth and into the emerging postmodern culture. Whereas many traditional churches and their youth groups are a tool for collecting the already-believers, the task of the youth church is to reach the lost generation.

However, the leaders of this youth church believe that the issues are not simply style of music or language or creativity. The real issue is much more fundamental and foundational. It is a cultural shift of gargantuan proportions, the transition from an industrial to an informational era, from modernity to postmodernity. Therefore, Karsten Wolff, the founding pastor, commented that "ultimately it is not about youth churches as

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 31.

such but about building churches for tomorrow which cannot be done with the methods and resources of today."³⁸¹ The pivotal issue is cultural relevance. "The task is not to reject or demonize the culture but to contextualize the message of hope into the culture and to redeem the young generation from abuse, perversion and self-destruction." The goal is not to create another Christian sub-culture but rather "to be the church in the developing postmodern culture." This has led them to adjust their evangelistic thrust from the youth to the postmodern culture. For the most part these two are almost synonymous but it has moved them away from being a one-generational church.

There are certain distinguishing marks that have been identified by several observers of the global youth church movement or new generation churches, all of which are visible in the "KRAFTWERK Dresden" church:

- Relationships the key to successful ministry amongst the completely unchurched.
- 2. "Bring the church to the people" incarnational approach.
- 3. Internet-ional connected both international and internet-ional.
- 4. Discipleship and action the emphasis is on discipleship and participation and not entertainment and passivity
- 5. Radicalness radical commitment to discipleship is evident. 382

In response to the question what the advantages and disadvantages of youth churches are, Müller responded that a distinct disadvantage is "the lack of spiritual parenthood." Positively, the youth church has freedom to be "unconventional and thus can break the negative presuppositions that people have of church."

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³⁸¹ Reinhold Scharnowski, "Gott Unter den Kids: Jugendkirchen – Modewelle oder Gemeinden für die Zukunft?," DAWN European Network, http://www.dawneurope.net/Gott_Kids.htm (accessed December 14, 2007).

³⁸² Ibid.

The "KRAFTWERK Dresden" church is a cell-based church. In other words, it is not a church with cell or small groups, but rather a church in which the various cells form the basis of community life.

Church Programs and Ministries

Weekly worship services are held on Sunday evenings. On the first Sunday of each month a brunch is offered for church members and their friends.

Since this is a cell-based church, twelve cell groups or small groups with an average of eight members meet weekly. The focus is discipleship and fellowship.

Courses for the basics of the faith are offered on a regular basis for newcomers or those interested to find out more about the Christian faith.

There is a ministry to teenagers for which a new youth minister was hired. Jesus Camp is a ministry to children. Summer camps are offered each year as well.

The church also participates in various evangelistic outreach events for the city as well as in other organized events by the Evangelical Alliance.

Church Leadership Structure-Leadership development

The leadership of the "KRAFTWERK Dresden" church was initially centered on the founders and ordained pastoral couple, Karsten and Alrun Wolff. As they developed their ministry leadership team they identified their responsibilities to be oversight of the preaching and teaching, leading the worship services, supervision and mentoring of the various ministry leaders and the development of future leaders.

Today the church leadership concept consists of two levels. First, there is the Core Team, ³⁸³ which functions much like a board of elders. Its main tasks include prayer for the church and its members, maintenance of the vision and values of the church, balancing the

³⁸³ Kraftwerk Dresden, "Leiterschaft im Kraftwerk," Kraftwerk Dresden, http://www.kraftwerk-dresden.de/index.php?id=28 (accessed November 26, 2007).

teaching and the practical application ministries, and the setting of priorities of the

community life of the church. In addition, the Core Team appoints new leaders and

supports and mentors the leaders of the various ministry areas.

The second level is called the leadership team (Leiterkreis) and functions as a

board of deacons. Its tasks include consultation with the leadership team and

implementation of its vision, and the networking and cooperation of the various areas of

ministry within the church.

Cell leaders are trained and mentored by three members of the leadership team.

Twice annually the cell leaders attend a week-end retreat for input, planning and training.

Finances

"KRAFTWERK Dresden" is supported exclusively by donations of the members

and friends of the church.

Statistical Information

Church attendance: 200-250

Church members: 130

Number of new converts: 40 (est.)

Number of baptisms: 40 (est.)

Number of small groups: 12

Summary and With-in Case Study Analysis

The origin of this ministry was a small group of born-again believers, mostly

young people, who had a burning desire to invite their friends to faith in Christ. The

existing churches in the area would not have been a place of mutual appreciation. A

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contextualized, loving community of faith was necessary which they sought to achieve in the initiative of a new church, "KRAFTWERK – Dresden."

Soon after the initial phases of the church planting effort it became clear to the leaders that it was not so much a youth church that was needed but a contextualized church into the postmodern culture which was developing in the 90's. To build a church that would reach the mind of the young generation who had been exposed to this major paradigm shift in the Western world was the task of this church. A small change in the approach to ministry to reflect this reality took place.

Today "KRAFTWERK – Dresden" has successfully transitioned into a multigenerational church and continues to carry the vision of reaching into the postmodern culture, making the Gospel understood in this new cultural language.

The fact that the leaders and pastors of this ministry are native to this region has helped immensely.

Case Study Number 4 – Arche in Chemnitz

General Information

- **♣** Name of youth church or youth project:
 - o Die Arche e.V.
- ♣ Address of youth church or youth project:
 - o Die Arche
 - o Augustusburger Str. 139 09126 Chemnitz
- **♣** Pastor, Leader or director of ministry:
 - o Tilo Reichold
- **♣** Interview Partner:
 - Andreas Walther Assistant Director

Narrative – History

In the year 1995 a small group of young Christian believers started to meet together in the city of Chemnitz. 384 They had a common vision of a place where one could live out his Christian commitment without repelling outsiders, a suitable place where young people who never attend church could find Jesus. This place would not be found inside church buildings but in a place where young people tend to hang out. A vision developed for a Christian youth center, money was raised to rent simple facilities and in the spring of 1996 the organization "Arche" (ark) was founded. Within one year an old, dilapidated house was renovated by volunteers and opened its doors to the young people of the city: a youth center with a youth club, Christian disco, weekly concerts, various

³⁸⁴ Die Arche, "A Hope for the young people in Chemnitz (eastern Germany) – die Arche (the ark)," Die Arche, http://www.arche-chemnitz.de/seiten/englischeversion/frameset_englisch.htm (accessed November 30, 2007). Until the political change in 1989, the city of Chemnitz in western Saxony was a symbol for communism and was called "Karl-Marx-Stadt." Even today the monumental bust of Karl Marx remains as one of the best-known landmarks in the center of town. After the collapse of Eastern Germany, unemployment became such a big problem, that many young people moved away, dropping the population from 300,000 to about 250,000 inhabitants today and it is still decreasing. For many young people, life is characterized by resignation and hopelessness. Less than five percent of the young people have any connection to church or the Christian faith. Instead, occultism, Satanism and right-wing radicalism are booming. Drug addiction and violence are getting to be a big problem even in schools.

outreach events and youth worship services. Since then more than one thousand events have taken place in these facilities.

Today some sixty volunteers are committed to fulfilling this vision of bringing Christ to the young people of this city. The most important part of the ministry is the weekly "Jesus-Party," an outreach event for young people without any contact to the church or the Christian faith. In the past few years many young people have surrendered their lives to Jesus during these services. Among those have been criminals, drug addicts and even Satanists. Some of those new believers have joined the "Arche" team and now give testimony to their faith in Christ to others.

Initially the new converts were encouraged to attend and become members of the various local churches in the area, ³⁸⁵ as the "Arche" did not have the intention of planting or being a church. When many of these converts would not or could not be integrated into other local churches, the "Arche-community" was started, a ministry and life community for those involved in the ministry. It is a church, but not in the classical understanding of a local church. Its worship services are not open to the public for example.

At the beginning of the year 2000 a former cinema (Kino Weltecho) was purchased and is being renovated to house the expanding ministries of the "Arche." It is slated to be dedicated in September 2008.

Denominational Affiliation

The "Arche" was started as an organization with an emphasis on evangelistic childrens' and youth ministries. It is affiliated with the local YMCA 386 and enjoys a warm

³⁸⁵ This is the classical approach of many para-church youth organizations such as Young Life or Youth for Christ.

³⁸⁶ The YMCA in Germany is the strongest and largest Christian youth organization with a fervent evangelistic thrust.

cooperation agreement and partnership with the local Freie evangelische Gemeinde³⁸⁷ in Chemnitz and is a member of the German Willow Creek network. For all practical purposes, however, it has no official denominational ties.

It enjoys excellent and friendly relationships with other local churches, emphasizing those theological truths which "unite rather than those which cause division and disunity." It is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and of the Ecumenical Forum.

Vision – Values – Goals – Strategy

The Vision of the "Arche" is to reach young people and introduce them to Christ, to equip them in their faith and to send them out into the world. The clear emphasis of this ministry is for the younger generation, children, teenagers and young adults.

In order to realize this vision the original leadership unified their hearts and minds and established the "Arche-community" in 2001. According to Walther, "in essence it is a church, a ministry and life community of the various co-workers. It is their spiritual home." Their desire is to be a community of committed believers who implement their God-given vision with their whole heart and strength.

The values of this "Arche-community" are six-fold:

- 1. Attendance at their monthly worship service (only open for members)
- 2. Tithing
- 3. Participation in the work-load and exercise of their spiritual gifts
- 4. No backbiting or speaking about someone behind their back
- 5. Living out clear biblical values in marriage/dating relationships
- 6. Every member seeks out a counsellor/mentor

The key word when it comes to strategy is "friendship evangelism." The "Arche" organizes many evangelistic events, but most of their evangelistic efforts are placed on relationships. The members are continually "encouraged to invite their friends and to live

³⁸⁷ Freie evangelische Gemeinde (FeG) is a free church denomination, comparable in many ways to the Evangelical Free Church denomination in the USA.

out their faith authentically." This is obviously "a constant battle" but fruit of their approach is visible.

The goals of the ministry at the "Arche" for the next year are mainly centered around getting the new building completely renovated and ready for use by September of 2008. Much still needs to be done, but strides have been taken towards that goal.

Once the new building has been dedicated, an expansion of programs has already been planned. Evangelistic efforts to reach children, youth and young adults will increase and other events are planned to increase the effectiveness of their outreach. However "the emphasis on personal relationships is to be maintained."

In addition plans are underway to start a training school for discipleship, leadership and youth ministry. This is to include instruction and practical ministry experience on-site.

Mentoring to the students will be another key element of this year-long training school.

Opportunities for teaching seminars on conferences or youth retreats have already arisen and will be pursued later.

On top of all of that, they have a vision for their city and have invested themselves for the sake of the unity of the body of Christ. To that end a magazine called "Vision" was launched. Christian unity is one of the expressed goals and values of the "Arche"

Philosophy of Ministry - Theology and Ecclesiology

The leaders of the "Arche" do not claim to be a youth church, but rather "an evangelistic organization reaching the younger generation for Christ." Walther is clear on the main vision and driving force behind this ministry when he asserts that "the reason why God called this ministry into being is the evangelistic ministry to children, youth and young adults." The church that has arisen out of it, the "Arche-community" is the community of faith for the individuals who "carry this burden and vision in their hearts." In other words, the original group did not set out first and foremost to plant a church. That

was of secondary concern. The church that has emerged is "a ministry community dedicated to fulfil this vision and dream."

The "Arche" has done a tremendous job in contextualising the Gospel for the younger generation. The translation of the message of the cross into the language of today's young, atheistic mindset has in no wise compromised the cost of discipleship. True discipleship is an important ingredient and highly valued.

Since all the co-workers and co-laborers in this ministry are from East Germany, the difficult task of adjusting into this culture is a non-issue. No missionaries from the West have ever been a part of this ministry full-time, even though this work has been supported, influenced and assisted by numerous ministry leaders from the USA, Switzerland and West Germany.

Church Programs and Ministries

The "Arche" provides several programs for different age groups throughout the week. Children aged six through ten, teen girls and young adults aged nineteen through twenty-nine all have their own separate meeting times.

To assist young people and students to openly profess their faith in their respective schools a monthly meeting for students was organized in which principles of sharing your faith and living out your faith openly are discussed. Prayer for their schools, teachers, fellow students is encouraged.

One of the most important ministries is the youth club every Saturday night. The first Saturday of every month the "Jesus-Party" with the worship band of the "Arche" is held. The second and fourth Saturdays is an open house with games, such as pool and darts, and a time for relational ministry. The third Saturday of every month a concert with a Christian band is organized.

Twice a year the well-known and well-received Alpha course is offered for seekers.

In addition, a soccer club team was started, the FC Arche Chemnitz e.V. to have a presence in one of the most important segments of German society.

Discipleship is a major emphasis of the ministry of the "Arche" and is encouraged on several levels. Discipleship classes are offered, as well as counselling sessions and small groups in which the various participants gain a well-rounded understanding of the Christian Gospel and can discover and practice their spiritual gifts.

However, the primary means of discipleship is one-on-one mentoring. The mentors are trained and given resources (such as forms on finances or relationships) in order that individual attention can be given to the mentees. The focus is on the individual and not a program. Up to this point the mentors have been adults, but starting next year also young people will be trained to become mentors.

All of this is done so that the new generation of believers are instructed, empowered, enabled to go out into the world for the sake of Christ and his Kingdom.

Church Leadership Structure-Leadership development

The "Arche" has a leadership team of five individuals who oversee the ministry.

An expanded leadership team includes three additional people who are in training. The founder and leader of this ministry is Tilo Reinhold who is assisted by Andreas Walther.

In addition there are fourteen team leaders overseeing their various ministry areas who meet on a regular basis for leadership development.

Leadership and leadership development is a key emphasis and priority. Much has been learned over the years, especially through the ministry of the Willow Creek

conventions in Germany. Next year they are planning to sponsor every team leader to the yearly Willow Creek leadership conference.

Responsible for leadership development within their ranks is the leadership team of the "Arche." Most leadership resources have come from the German Willow Creek network.

The members of the main leadership team have committed themselves to quarterly one-day retreats of silence, contemplation and listening to God.

Finances

There are no governmental or public financial resources made available to this ministry. All of the finances are given by sponsors and donors of the supporters of the "Arche."

Statistical Information

- Church attendance: 30-80 (have had several with over 100)
- Church members: 32 (For co-workers only and led by leadership team)
- Number of new converts: about 100
- Number of baptisms: 25 (only in conjunction with the FeG church)
- Number of small groups: 14 (ministry teams are the small groups meet monthly)

Additional Information – Stories

In reading the various testimonies on the website of the "Arche" it becomes quickly obvious that God has been at work in this community. Real people have been touched by a real God.

In answering the question what surprises the leaders of this ministry have experienced the immediate response by Walther was "what God has done and continues to do." The various miracles and the realization that God was in it all was the biggest surprise and the biggest gift.

When God gave the vision to buy the new facility a few years ago, a total of \$ 2500 was in the account. Since then God has provided more than \$ 1.5 million. And yet "the ultimate is not the new building or the money we have been able to raise, but conversions," individual people meeting the living God of the universe. That is where the focus must lie.

To the question if they would do anything differently, Walther answered, "to pray more and to listen more to God; to act more out of prayer and only do what God is showing us." Even though every human being is important and invaluable, "God needs to be at the center."

Summary and With-in Case Study Analysis

The "Arche" in Chemnitz has a passion for reaching the children and young people for Christ but does not see itself as a youth church. The defining vision of its leaders was ministry among the children and young people of the community, providing avenues for making personal decisions for Christ and discipleship opportunities for spiritual growth. The intent was not to plant a church but to do evangelistic youth ministry. The resulting church is considered a fellowship of Christian workers involved in this ministry rather than a typical church.

The effectiveness of the ministry is enhanced due to the fact that the leaders and pastors of this ministry are native to this region.

Case Study Number 5 – Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg

General Information

- **♣** Name of youth church or youth project:
 - o Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg
- ♣ Address of youth church or youth project:
 - Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg
 Office: Dorfstr. 14
 17039 Neverin

Tel.: 039608-20 556; Fax.: 20 555 e-mail: Info@Lindetalgemeinde.de

- **Leader** of ministry:
 - o Rainer Klatt
- **♣** Interview Partner:
 - o Rainer Klatt

Narrative – History

Shortly after the Berlin Wall came down a young couple from West Germany moved to the city of Neubrandenburg to plant a church. With a population of seventy thousand citizens it is the third largest city in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania state in Germany, about one hundred miles north of Berlin. Rainer Klatt, his wife and a small team started in the year 1992 by offering various activities to young people, primarily youth retreats. Through surveys and regional analyses they found a real need in the area of open youth work, especially as "the extremely well-organized youth work of the communistic party of the former GDR had completely collapsed and was no longer in existence." At one of their early retreats they attracted four hundred participants and today the organization is considered an official agency for local youth work.

The founding of the church plant took place several years later in the year 1997. Klatt articulates that "we don't consider ourselves a youth church even though many church members and attenders are of the younger generation. We are a dynamic church which is there for every person of any age, attempting to be culturally relevant in all we do and in our language."

Denominational Affiliation

The "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" has a loose affiliation with the German free-church denomination called Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden which is a denomination consisting of Baptist and Brethren churches.

It is their expressed desire to work and minister closely with other denominations and churches in the area. When Rainer Klatt first moved into town, he and his team successfully sought out other churches for support and cooperation.

Vision – Values – Goals – Strategy

The church planter, Rainer Klatt, did not have a written vision statement at the beginning of their ministry but allowed things to develop over time within the church. During the interview Rainer Klatt put their vision into words by saying, "it is to lead people to Christ and help them in becoming leaders themselves in word and deed, to help them become servants of Christ for the community and society." Klatt sees his role as being a trainer not the pastor of the existing congregation.

The values are inspired by Rick Warren's five purposes for the church: worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and service. In addition, Klatt says, "we have a high commitment to competence and quality in whatever it is we provide, and we try to minister in a relevant and authentic manner."

In describing the process by which a non-believer develops into a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ, Rainer Klatt responded that there is no standardized, uniform process, except "that it almost always happens through and in relationships over a long time period." As many individuals live "in isolation and are searching for real community," the church body is attractive and allows people to observe and experience the life Christ has to offer. Through this process people are led to a fuller understanding of who Christ is.

The church always talks in terms of "individuals taking steps towards Christ."

Many steps are required and much patience for a completely atheistic individual to come to the place of receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

Philosophy of Ministry - Theology and Ecclesiology

One strategic principle in the ministry of this church plant is "information before mission/evangelism." Klatt maintains that "in this thoroughly atheistic environment, most people need to be informed about the Christian faith before they can make an informed decision." The verse that has been their foundation and support in their approach is found in Ecclesiastes 3:11 which states that "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men." "My assumption is that God has put this longing and yearning into the hearts of each and every person. The job of the church is to attempt to awaken that yearning." Therefore their strategy is not to hold evangelistic meetings or events but to rely on relational encounters with individuals.

High quality activities are offered, relationships are sought out and the spiritual yearning is awakened. Some even have dreams at night which point them clearly to the next step in their search for God. Since it is the Holy Spirit that ultimately draws and

convicts people, space and time is provided for the Spirit of God to do his work. The leaders exude a confidence in the grace, love and redemptive plan of the Father in Heaven.

In answering the question regarding contextualization, Rainer Klatt and his wife have experienced no problems when it comes to adjusting to life in the former GDR. He has adapted very well and is received openly. Their children were born and are being raised in this community and their family feels at home in Neubrandenburg. These are their neighbors and friends with whom they live life. Many are surprised when they find out that he is not from there. Their biggest adjustment was moving into an old farm house with an outhouse. From the very beginning great and fascinating opportunities for ministry opened up for them.

He perceives that many other church planting projects are started with much pressure to succeed quickly and with unnatural approaches. In their experience, the whole process was given time to develop relationships naturally. And "whatever happens naturally is normal and not perceived as foreign, artificial or negative." They have never felt this pressure, but could take time to listen to God and take direction from Him. One example of this was the insight early on when they provided a summer camp for children so that parents could continue to work throughout the summer as they had been used to in the former GDR. They were thus meeting the felt needs of their community and could serve them. The "naturalness" of the ministry is the essential ingredient.

To the question why church planting worked for them and not for many others in the former GDR, Klatt answered, "Many from the West came with a bag filled with ideas, with the blessings of the West. They thought they were coming with the ready-made solution to what the East Germans had been waiting for all this time. But most simply were not connecting and not really communicating with the East German mind-set. Little time was invested to really understand the mentality, the pains, the fears of the East

German. Many meant well but did not realize that the East Germans are extremely sensitive and seem to sense the difference between a real friendship and a friendship with a hidden agenda, i.e. conversion. With the one-track mind to evangelize without the willingness to spend the time to develop relationships, the long process for an East German to accept Christ was short-circuited."

Church Programs and Ministries

Weekly programming includes children and youth work, an open café, which is well-received by the community at large, small group meetings and leadership training for small groups. Even though these programs are offered, the emphasis of the ministry is on personal relationships.

Discipleship is another major emphasis of this ministry and happens primarily in small groups and through relationships. Regular seminars on various levels are being offered or are in preparation:

- 1. "Basics of the Christian faith" course (Glaubensgrundkurs) have been offered for the last two years
- 2. Baptismal courses have been offered for several years

The following two courses are being prepared and will be offered soon:

- 3. "Leadership" course (Leiterschaftsgrundkurs)
- 4. "Basics of Church" course (Gemeindegrundkurs)

Young people participate in all these courses, including the leadership training sessions.

The church celebrates communion three times every month; once on Sunday nights and twice on Sunday mornings.

Church Leadership Structure – Leadership Development

Rainer Klatt considers himself a trainer and the leader rather than the pastor of this

congregation and ministry. The church does have four elders and nine other leaders of the

various ministries who are members of the leadership team.

In terms of leadership development, leadership training sessions are offered on a

regular basis, but much training occurs by the process of "learning by doing" and through

intense relationships. Well-known, standard resources are used for their training sessions.

The biggest challenge in the process of leadership development is lack of time of

potential leaders. Klatt adds that "the best and most productive and capable members of

the church are also the busiest in their professions." In a ministry that relies heavily on

volunteers this has proved to be difficult.

Overall the members of the church are very willing to serve and take on

responsibilities. Mistakes are made but are seen as part of the process of learning and

developing.

Finances

The "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" is financed by the church members and

through private donations and sponsors.

Statistical Information

• Church attendance: 80

Church members: 45

• Number of new converts: 2/3 of the membership are new converts; it is

important to them not to attract people from other churches

• Number of baptisms: same as above

162

• Number of small groups: 5

• Youth Group: 1

Additional Information – Stories

To the question what surprised him most, Klatt answered that time would not be sufficient to respond adequately. The essence of the answer, however, "is the grace, forgiveness and love of the Father in Heaven." The conversion of individuals is still the most awesome, inspiring and surprising experience for a minister or church planter.

Stories like the following: two former female colleagues who had not seen each other in twenty-five years had a chance meeting one day. One had accepted Christ and was a member in Klatt's church. As she was listening to the brokenness of the other ladies' experience, the Christian lady responded by encouraging her to open her heart to Christ. She accepted Christ right there and then and was baptized two weeks later and is now an active volunteer in the church.

Another young person who after five or six suicide attempts comes to Christ, attends the basics of the faith course. One week later his sister joins the course, another week later, the mother. At the baptismal service his grandfather attends, a former hardened communistic national army specialist and comes up to an elder afterwards and says with tears in his eyes: "You have given my grandson what no one else in our family could give him. I want to thank you." He has now attended the worship service twice.

What surprises Klatt is how God can change hardened people, move them to tears, and reveal Himself to them. This confirms his conviction based on Ecclesiastes 3, that God has created us with eternity in our hearts.

To the question what he would do differently, Klatt responded, "I would do everything over again the same way, including all the mistakes we have made, to make clear that mistakes are part of the deal because forgiveness is part of the deal."

Summary and With-in Case Study Analysis

The goal and vision of the leaders of the "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" was to plant a church in this north-eastern region of the former GDR. The beginning thrust of the ministry was outreach events specifically designed for the youth in the city but there was never the intention to become a youth church. Though most of the participants and members of the church today are of the younger generation, it can best be described as a typical, multi-generational, family church.

Cross Case Analysis

The process of extracting meaning from the data is the main objective of analyzing the collected data. In having completed the case studies and the within-case study analysis of the three youth churches and two evangelistic ministries for youth and children in the East German context, it is now our task to interpret the evidence in the second stage of analysis, the cross-case analysis.

Differences

First of all it is essential to point out that there are some significant differences in the various self-conceptions or mission statements of these different "youth churches" and youth ministries. The "Junge Kirche Berlin" and "KRAFTWERK – Dresden" have both successfully transitioned into multi-generational churches with a heavy focus and

emphasis on contextualizing the Gospel. The former seeks to be sensitive to the East

German mindset of atheism and a-religiosity whereas the latter emphasizes the importance
of adjusting to the postmodern mindset of the Western world.

The "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" never intended to be a youth church but started its ministry with outreach events specifically for the youth in the region. It does not fit the mold of a youth church even though it does attract a large number of young people.

The "Arche" in Chemnitz has a passion for reaching children and young people for Christ but does not see itself as a youth church. A church has developed out of this ministry, but it is limited to the workers and volunteers of the youth ministry with a high degree of commitment required. The "Arche" is an evangelistic youth ministry but not a youth church.

The "Jugendkirche Marzahn" is still primarily a youth church but is also in the process of transitioning to a church for young adults and young families.

Therefore, for the purpose of definitional accuracy, only three of the five projects investigated in the case studies can be classified as actual youth churches. The reason why the other two case studies remained part of the research was to highlight the potential effectiveness of evangelistic youth ministry in the former GDR and show the small number of actual youth churches being planted. The need is there and the promising evidence for future ministries directed at the youth can encourage further youth church initiatives.

Other dissimilarities between the various youth church plants can be found, reaching from the make-up and structure of the leadership team to the denominational affiliation, if any, to leadership development to the practical outworkings of the ministries.

To some extent differences can even be found in the philosophy of ministry, the vision and strategies of the various ministries.

A point of significance is the question and principle of indigeneity of the church planter and/or ministry team. Two churches have leaders who are native to the area; three are from the outside, having moved to the area with the specific intent of planting a church. The advantage of having an indigenous person as the leader cannot be overemphasized without diminishing the significant contribution that "outsiders" can make.

In the "Cross Case Analysis Chart" below is a list of the ingredients visible in most of the youth church plants or projects. Most of the practical principles operative in the various youth churches are self-explanatory, but a few comments about the question marks visible in some of the columns are necessary.

In the "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" the church planter did not arrive with a written purpose or vision statement in hand. He wanted to allow the people themselves to develop those in time. Nevertheless, he had a vision in his heart and knew he was called to plant a church in that area.

Regarding the "postmodern emphasis" there are voices in scholarly circles³⁸⁸ that doubt if postmodernism is an issue at all in the former GDR. Caution is advised in using the term postmodernism in the East German context. However, "KRAFTWERK – Dresden" has identified their task to contextualize the Gospel into the postmodern mindset of our age. The other initiatives are certainly aware of the dynamics of this new phenomenon and have shown sensitivity to this issue without overemphasizing its significance. Being involved in incarnational ministry Jesus-style will naturally reflect some of the emphases of postmodernism such as the importance of relationships and experience without succumbing to the fallacies of some others such as religious pluralism,

³⁸⁸ Dr. Sabine Schröder and Dr. Michael Herbst advise caution when dealing with the concept of postmodernism in the former GDR. From a personal e-mail, Dr. Schröder admitted that postmodernism has certainly affected the thinking of the East German but from a different background. Postmodernism did not grow out of that context but has been received and accepted without much reflection, possibly even imposed from the outside. Postmodernism presupposes modernism and the question remains if modernism was ever much of a force in the former GDR.

subjective truth, moral relativism and skepticism about objective, scientific explanations of reality.

The other principle which reveals question marks in the chart is the "intentional, strategic programming geared towards youth." Both the "Junge Kirche Berlin" and the "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg" used the youth track initially in the process of church planting and still offer some programs to this age group, but have expanded programs to other age groups as well. Also the other youth churches have expanded their program options to accommodate a changing "clientele."

Similarities

The more important question to ask, however, is what similarities there are. Where are the parallels, where are the resemblances? What are the practical principles or characteristics operative in the different youth churches and can patterns or themes to be identified?

The major features that emerged out of the research and which have played a significant role in the planting and on-going ministry of these youth churches can be summarized into six major categories as pointed out in the "Cross Case Analysis Chart" below: vision and intentionality, leadership, passion, relationship, cell-based and contextualization.

Each of these youth churches or youth ministries exhibits a clear vision and direction for its ministries. Empowering, effective leadership with the desire and plan to involve the laity, i.e. the young people, in the ministry and the principle of multiplication operative at all levels is emphasized. There is an obvious sense of passion that is evidenced in the worship services and in the priority given to prayer and the pursuit of God. The commitment to relational, incarnational ministry in all facets of the life of the church, be it evangelism or discipleship or small groups, is a high priority. The structure

of the churches is based on a cell-congregational dynamic in which the worship services on Sundays for the entire congregation is balanced of with a well-planned cell group ministry. Finally, there is a high degree of commitment to the process of critical contextualization, making church understandable to an atheistic, post-modern, unchurched young person. With a creative and flexible approach to church, young people are being reached for Christ and drawn into the Kingdom.

An interesting observation is that all the characteristics operative in the youth churches are or should be visible and operative in all and every church of Jesus Christ.

This reinforces the notion that these youth churches are real churches. The only major difference in these developing youth churches is their strategic limitation to one age-group for the sake of initial effectiveness.

It is clear from the case studies that the target group of the youth churches are not the Christian young people accustomed to the culture of the church and attending existing churches, but much rather the un-reached young people that nobody else is reaching. This is the driving force behind all initiatives that have been researched. Each one is a Kingdom seeker, wanting to lead young people to a personal relationship with Christ, and desiring to extend and enlarge the Kingdom of God.

In addition, all have the goal of transitioning or growing into a family, young adult and multi-generational church, being aware and wrestling with the youth church concept and realizing that it has a limited ecclesiology and does not reflect the all-inclusiveness of the body of Christ.

A Visionary Model for a Youth Church in East Germany

To cast a vision it is most electrifying to imagine the ideal. So what would an ideal youth church in East Berlin look like? Given all the research above, the various extant

characteristics of youth churches globally, the theological, missiological, contextual parameters in mind, is it possible to draw up a visionary model?

The youth church planter/pastor/leader would be a dynamic, engaging and charismatic man in his late twenties. His forte would be preaching, teaching and leadership with a healthy dose of administrative skill. He would have gathered an international team of young, energetic, creative, talented individuals, both singles and young couples. In addition, an older, spiritually mature prayer warrior would provide spiritual covering.

In terms of the noted qualities or principles of a youth church as outlined by the "cross-case analysis chart" below, the youth pastor and his team would have developed clearly defined statements of purpose, vision, values and specific goals during a week-end leadership retreat saturated in times of prayer, fasting and worship. The goals would include Kingdom-seeking, evangelistic, missional, incarnational, intentional activities. Priorities for prayer and fasting times would have been established.

Secondly, leadership is of the essence and is a highly-valued commodity. The leadership structure is team-based and the focus is lay-oriented. The leadership style, approach and philosophy reflect the model exemplified by Jesus Christ himself. The training and development of leaders is a strategic and intentional plan. The identifying, training and releasing of spiritual gifts for the edification of the body is a high priority. Young people are given the tools and the authority to be involved in all aspects of the life of the church for the youth church is to be a church for youth and by youth. The taking ownership by the young people is encouraged.

The third quality which permeates the entire ethos or culture of the ideal youth church is passion or radicalness. Christ's radical call to follow him as outlined in his

statement regarding the cost of discipleship³⁸⁹ is communicated with conviction and loving force. Worship is a total-life mentality and is not limited to an emotional expression of music during a worship service. Passion for God and for his creation, his world and his people would be evident. When it comes to the worship service, however, the style of worship would be electric, earnest, vibrant, participatory and active.

Fourthly, relational ministry and a heavy emphasis on community primarily operative through cells or small groups are considered the very foundation and the essence of the ministry. There is an atmosphere of high personal care, characterized by the love of Christ often expressed in practical ways. A community of care is the foundation upon which all ministries are carried out. Closely related to this emphasis is the incarnational approach to ministry. The slogan "bring the church to the people" as opposed to bringing people to the churches reveals the determined mind-set of its leaders to be the church in the midst of the prevailing culture. Being where the people are, identifying with them, living in close proximity to them, sharing life with them is part of the holistic philosophy of ministry. Offering non-threatening, extra-curricular activities and hanging out where the young people are will develop naturally into meaningful relationships for the sake of the Gospel. Part of the incarnational and relational focus on ministry is the emphasis on radical discipleship. The church leaders are not in the entertainment business but have a high value in mentoring young believers to become passionate disciples of Christ. The discipleship process includes intentional training for effective Christian leadership. The result is the empowerment of the younger generation for ministry.

Fifthly, the above-mentioned traits fit well with a cell-based church. The balance between an effective cell group ministry and a vibrant worship service on the congregational level provides a well-rounded approach to the differing needs of a person.

A smaller, intimate setting for relational care, personalized prayer, accountability, worship

³⁸⁹ Luke 9:23-24.

and more focused biblical discussion is balanced with a larger meeting in which the entire body of Christ comes together for celebratory worship, the participation in the sacraments and the encouragement and challenge from the preached Word.

Sixthly, the paramount concern for critical contextualization is a major key in the effectiveness and success of this ideal youth church plant. With adjectives such as flexible, spontaneous, vibrant, energetic, creative, internetional, ³⁹⁰ passionate, relational, incarnational, missional and evangelistic the youth church attempts to break into the world of the youth generation. What cannot be forgotten is the effective inculturation of the Gospel into the atheistic, a-religious and religiously indifferent context of the former GDR. Even though the wall has come down almost twenty years ago, the young generation is still marked by the pervasive climate of atheistic ideology of the totalitarian regime of their parents. The ideal youth church deals with this dynamic head-on and honestly but with a great deal of sensitivity and patience, willing to listen and learn.

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³⁹⁰ This is not a misprint, but a combination of two descriptive words for the youth churches today: international and internet-use. The global youth generation has a definite international dimension as they interact with each other through the medium of the internet, be it games or chat-rooms or blogs. The world wide web is their domain and their place for exchange of ideas, thoughts and even products.

Cross Case Analysis Chart: Practical Principles

Practical Principles	JKM	JKB	KRD	ARC	LIN
I. Vision and Intentionality	_			_	
Clearly defined and communicated vision & values	✓	✓	✓	√	?
Intentional relational evangelism	√	✓	✓	✓	✓
Missional – outreach-focused	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kingdom seekers	√	✓	✓	✓	√
_					
II. Leadership					
Team-based leadership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong emphasis on leadership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lay-oriented ministry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MAWL principle – model, assist, watch, leave	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multiplication mentality at all levels	✓	✓	✓	✓	√
III. Passion					
Priority of prayer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Act on God's sovereign leading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Experiencing God emphasized	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IV. Relationships					
Relational on-going discipleship/mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Radical discipleship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community of Care and Growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Love – high personal care	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meeting practical needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incarnational	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
V. Cell- based					
Cell-congregation balance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VI. Contextualization					
Always seeking better contextualization	✓	✓	√	✓	✓
Postmodern emphasis	?	?	✓	?	?
Flexibility	√	✓	√	✓	√
Contemporary worship style	√	✓	√	√	√
Creativity	✓	✓	√	✓	✓
Intentional, strategic programming towards youth	✓	?	✓	✓	?

Explanation of abbreviations:

JKM – Jugendkirche Marzahn

JKB – Junge Kirche Berlin

KRD - KRAFTWERK Dresden

ARC - Arche

LIN – Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Three main streams have been researched, discussed and are being brought together in the conclusion: the religious context of the former German Democratic Republic, the theological discussion on the youth church concept and the case studies on youth churches.

Summary on Religious Context of the former GDR

First, there is the religious context of the former German Democratic Republic.

The statistics paint a bleak picture of an extensive and devastating spiritual darkness, leaving the vast majority of the citizens "immune" to spiritual and religious realities. The vast majority of the East German people identify themselves as atheistic and a-religious. Terms such as "religiously unmusical" and "homo areligiosus" define the relationship between the average East German and religion or God. Not just the repressive regime of the SED during the period of Germany's forced political division after World War II, but also the preceding Nazi regime during the 30's and 40's are to be made responsible for the uniquely East German phenomenon of Konfessionslosigkeit and a-religiosity. Several other factors contributed to the overall demise of the church: the inner secularization starting in the 19th century fed by the theology of the protestant reformation, the introduction of the agrarian model of landed nobility around the same time, and the onset of modernity and modernization.

This Konfessionslosigkeit coupled with the limitations and insignificance of the existing churches due to their marginalization in East German society presents the biggest challenge to the German church in its history. As a matter of fact, Christian proclamation encounters for the first time in its entire history not other religions, but a robust a-religious

milieu.³⁹¹ It is proving to be highly resistant towards all forms of mission endeavors, including those of the sects. Various attempts at church planting and evangelism in the former GDR have proven to be ineffective. The staunchness of the a-religiosity and general indifference to anything religious certainly plays the major role. German religious sociologist Erhart Neubert predicts that we have to reckon with the phenomenon of Konfessionslosigkeit and its "blockade attitude" for some time to come. The blockades of socialism and forced socialization based on Marxist-Leninist ideology need to be overcome and the East German freed from the mental bonds, fetters which they received from the totalitarian state. 393 Another German religious sociologist Detlef Pollack agrees with the assessment and assumes that there will not be a religious resurrection in the foreseeable future. As a matter of fact, he predicts that the church will continue to shrink. The politically motivated de-Christianization of society by the SED left an incriminatory legacy that cannot be removed easily. ³⁹⁴ An example of this legacy comes from a survey taken at the train station in Leipzig. A youth was asked, "Would you classify yourself as a Christian, religious or a-religious?" The confused and halting response was, "I don't know...I am normal."395

The robust a-religiosity is a socio-religious reality and is a tremendous hindrance to fulfilling the Great Commission. But so are two other factors. First, there is the likelihood that the East German church itself and its members have been captured by the break in tradition and the profound secularization. Undoubtedly, the hostile environment of the SED-controlled country and its state-induced religious erosion has had an impact on

³⁹¹ Tiefensee, "Religiös Unmusikalisch?," 24-53.

³⁹² Neubert, "Gründlich Ausgetrieben," 43.

³⁹³ Ibid., 106.

³⁹⁴ Pollack, "Säkularisierung," 94.

³⁹⁵ Tiefensee, "Homo areligiosus," 12.

the church itself. The marginalization of religion and faith in general and the Christian church in particular has led to a lack of confidence in the church. Secondly, as Sabine Schröder has observed, there is an inability or unwillingness of church planters and evangelists from the West to invest time and effort in fully understanding, reflecting and empathizing with the East German people. This disinclination translates into a lack of contextualized evangelism and church planting, resulting in relative ineffectiveness.³⁹⁶

Possible responses to this bleak scenario and profound spiritual darkness include the encouragement of the existing churches and their members in fulfilling their Godgiven calling of reaching their neighbors, friends and family members for Christ by strengthening their God-confidence which will affect their own self-confidence as believers in Christ. The church has something significant and eternal to offer the world.

On a broader level "a religious re-alphabetization"³⁹⁷ or a religious "re-education"³⁹⁸ is necessary. This goes beyond the task of the church. Educational, political and social leaders need to be part of this process. More time, patience and understanding for psychological healing and grief work is still required.

The task of church planting will remain a significant challenge for some time to come. One young believer in East Berlin responded to a question regarding church planting in East Berlin by saying, "to plant a church in Marzahn (an East Berlin district) is like trying to establish a Satanist club in the Vatican." Awareness, sensitivity and a steep learning curve for the process of contextualization of the Gospel is required. In the words of Rainer Klatt, church planter of the "Lindetalgemeinde Neubrandenburg," "in order to earn the right to be heard, time and competence are required." That in addition to

³⁹⁶ Schröder, *K onfessionslose*, 238-239.

³⁹⁷ Neubert, "Kirche und Konfessionslosigkeit," 389.

³⁹⁸ Motikat, "Konfessionslosigkeit," 47.

³⁹⁹ Stefan Keller, "Church Planting in an A-Religious, Post-Socialistic Context" (Th.M. diss., University of South Africa, 2007), 61.

an attitude of humility and an incarnational paradigm of ministry will serve the church of Christ well.

Summary on Ecclesiology and Missiology

The second major stream represents the most essential part of this research project for it is here that the Word of God moves to center stage. The all-important question on God's perspective on the youth church concept was addressed. The theological, ecclesiological and missiological implications for this fresh expression of church were investigated. After thorough review of all the issues it was concluded that the youth church concept does not represent the ideal version of Christ's church, but is a justifiable strategy to fulfill the missionary and evangelistic mandate.

Concerning the homogenous unit principle, the youth church certainly ministers primarily to just one generation, the youth, which can be considered a homogenous unit. As was shown, even this principle can be ascribed a cautious and daring legitimacy under certain situation and as a penultimate socio-theological dynamic. A homogeneous unit church, in this case the youth church, is not the final product, but a means to an end. For a desperate and overwhelming situation such as the former GDR, the youth church concept can provide a radical answer to a radical problem. It can be used as a strategic measure for the sake of extending the Kingdom of God.

Hiebert's helpful identification and explanation of the concept of "critical contextualization" gives guidance in exegeting the culture in order to understand it deeply. Once it is understood, biblical teachings and principles are brought to bear on it for the sake of the process of evaluation leading into the creation of new contextualized Christian practices. If the process is done correctly, carefully and sensitively what ought to emerge is a contextualized theology and church that is not alien to the culture.

⁴⁰⁰ Hiebert, *Insights*, 186-190.

For example, two distinct and typical East German cultural features are the active week-end or Dacha⁴⁰¹ culture and the importance and high value of relationships and small, safe communities. Many East Germans had a little cabin outside the city to which they would retreat with their family and a small circle of friends. Due to the extensive spying network public places and public opinions were kept to a minimum. But in a safe, private place surrounded by a comfortable circle of friends people said all kinds of things, including derogatory and negative comments about their government.

Any new church plants need to be sensitive to this cultural phenomenon and emphasize small group or cell group ministries to allow for the safe and private environment in which people can talk openly. In addition, a Sunday morning service, especially during the summer months, might not be the best idea as the week-ends lasts through Sunday night and the vast majority of the East Germans have not been socialized to attend a meeting on a Sunday morning. For this reason and for the sheer fact that young people are late-nighters which makes a Sunday morning meeting uninviting, many youth churches hold their services in the evening.

What sets a youth church apart from an ordinary multi-generational church is the emphasis on one homogenous unit, the youth generation, and the serious attempt at critical contextualisation into the youth culture. The practical implication is that the style of church is more spontaneous, more flexible, less formal, less polished. The style of worship is more passionate, more zealous, perhaps louder and more raw. The preaching is more informal and in the vernacular of the youth.

Regarding the atheistic mind-set, the emphasis on relational, incarnational and missional principles of ministry and a deep commitment to an authentic, transparent lifestyle over a long time period and with a great deal of patience are the important features to be implemented. In addition, solid and accurate information on the Christian life must be

⁴⁰¹ Dacha is the Russian word for seasonal or year-round second homes located outside of cities.

provided which involves a process of debunking the old paradigms of church and faith and correcting the horrendous misinformation and outright lies which had been promulgated through the effective propaganda machine of the atheistic regime of the GDR.

Summary on the Case Study Research

The third stream, presented in the fifth chapter, deals with the actual research itself: the description of the five youth churches (youth ministries) in a case study format. The with-in case study analysis of each youth church is followed by the cross case analysis.

The cross case analysis revealed a terrific amount of overlap in the vision and overall philosophy of ministry. The heart for the younger generation and the commitment to reach the lost for Christ is paramount. Much energy is invested in building authentic relationships, in doing incarnational ministry and in leading the young people into a life of radical discipleship. Intentional, contextualized strategies are employed and practical solutions sought to fulfill the Great Commandment.

The six most important practical principles or characteristics operative in the youth churches investigated were: vision and intentionality, effective leadership, passion for God and his Kingdom, relationships and the emphasis on incarnational ministry, cell-based and critical contextualization.

The less-than-euphoric statistics of the three youth churches prove the seriousness of the atheistic and a-religious mentality in the former GDR. It is a tough place to minister and planting youth churches is not the magic key. Rather, it is one of many different keys, all of which are necessary to be able to unlock the hearts of the East German citizens. The planting of youth churches, as a strategic measure, can become part of a comprehensive strategy for the completion of the task of evangelisation of former East Germany.

Outcomes

The overall outcomes of this research can be summarized three-fold. First, the people of the former GDR reveal a robust atheistic worldview in which religion, God and the church are all completely irrelevant. A nebulous shroud of "unconscious atheism," which most can hardly articulate but which seems deeply rooted has settled over this geographic region. The challenge for church planters is profound and the need for contextualized theology absolutely indispensable.

Secondly, the youth church concept, based on the principle of the homogenous unit principle, is a missiologically defensible strategic measure for this particular contextual situation. It is a penultimate socio-theological dynamic and a means to an end, not the final product.

Thirdly, the youth church concept takes seriously the "theological imperative" of contextualizing theology in an "attempt to understand the Christian faith in terms of a particular context." Not just the two classical theological sources (*loci theologici*) of Scripture and tradition enter into the equation but also present human experience, i.e. culture, history and contemporary thought forms.

Recommendations

The ramifications for the future of church planting and evangelism in the East

German context deal primarily with the serious work of critical contextualization in all

facets of the ministry, from the writing of the vision to the training of new leaders to the

actual ministry of the new church plant. There is no way around this critical task and there

are no easy answers and no short-cuts to this process of learning, listening and exegeting a

⁴⁰² Pollack, "Der Wandel," 250.

⁴⁰³ Bevans, *Models*, 10.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 1.

culture. A youth church as well as any other church plant in the East German context needs to take this process very seriously.

In terms of recommendations for further study, the role of leadership in this particular context could prove to be a real profitable research project. With the historical, political, religious and social climate in the former GDR, the type of leaders needed for effective church planting is a crucial matter. (See Appendix A: Leadership and Church Planting Track – this is a first attempt at providing training for future youth church planters). In addition, a practical guide and training course for youth church planters for this particular context could provide necessary training and vision for those who have a calling to church planting. Along the same lines, a network of youth churches for encouragement, training, mentoring, exchanging of ideas and prayer support could be established.

When dealing with youth churches, one other significant issue that could still be researched and studied is the process of youth churches developing into multi-generational churches. What measures and tactics can be employed to assist in this process in a more healthy and organized manner? (This present study simply ascertained that youth churches are naturally developing in this direction.)

Another matter that could be explored is the role of private business as an evangelistic tool. One of the biggest needs in the East German context is employment, primarily opportunities for young people. If jobs are a felt need, could entrepreneurial small businesses create more jobs and give Christian business owners a witness for Christ in the market?

Finally, the tension between continuity and innovation, as the church seeks to remain relevant in today's youth culture, could be a worthwhile study. What are core and unchangeable aspects to the church and demand continuity and what aspects are changeable or dispensable and could be sacrificed for the sake of innovation?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the most crucial statement to be made at the end of this research paper is the affirmation that God is sovereign over all things. The church was his idea from the very beginning and there is no force powerful enough to thwart God's good intentions for his bride. Paul reminds the Philippian believers that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Neither the youth church concept nor any other new expression of church will ruin God's ultimate plan. That is no excuse for lazy or haphazard theological thinking or for outright disobedience to God's clear commands and injunctions. But it is a sacred and comforting reassurance that God is in control.

With that in mind, the youth church concept is problematic ecclesiologically. Nevertheless, this creative and "ecclesiologically dangerous" approach for this alarming situation should be given a fair hearing and a genuine try. Dramatic problems demand dramatic solutions. In times of great need, creative solutions with a smidgen of pragmatism are appropriate. The visionary leadership of Franklin Roosevelt during the Great Depression is a great example. He called for "bold, persistent experimentation," by saying, "it is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

The simple but sobering fact of the matter is that many young people live in these atheistic environments with no access to a meaningful opportunity to comprehend the significance, freshness and glory of the Gospel of Christ. The urgency of the task is monumental; the situation critical; the church overwhelmed, incapable and ineffective.

This work is a plea for more missionaries and resources to be applied to the strategy of planting youth churches in the former GDR.

⁴⁰⁵ Phil 1:6.

⁴⁰⁶ Quoted in Ronald Heifitz's *Leadership Without Easy Anwers* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1994), 23.

For the majority of East Germans, including young people, the church is a foreign and strange culture; the language of the church incomprehensible. The onus remains on the church to make its message understandable and relevant. It has to be inculturated to make God's love meaningful to the atheistic, secular and un-churched mind.

Criticism of the youth church concept is justified but only if at the same time the task of world evangelization to this unique people group is advancing by virtue of another approach and individuals are being pulled from the dangers of hell. The well-known and influential missionary C.T. Studd of the late 19th and early 20th century, one of the "Cambridge Seven" who offered himself to Hudson Taylor's challenge to serve as missionaries with the China Inland Mission, said it well, "some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." The task is urgent and the response insubstantial. The invitation for young people to come to the Savior must be articulated. A way to their hearts must be found. If the youth church concept is indeed a way to reach them for Christ let more youth churches be planted for the glory of God and the extension of His Kingdom.

APPENDIX A:

LEADERSHIP/CHURCH PLANTING TRACK FOR MARTIN BUCER SEMINARY (MBS)

Background of Martin Bucer Seminary

The Martin Bucer Seminary, consisting of five different study centers, provides an alternative to "German seminaries (which) are becoming increasingly irrelevant to ministry." It is committed to reformed theology and missions is at the center of the curriculum. All aspects of theological education are directed towards church planting and world missions.

Martin Bucer (1491-1551) was a reformer of the 16th century from Straßbourg who had great impact on all four branches of the Protestant Church: Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Baptist. This spirit of unity is at the heart of the seminary which hopes to bring together students of varying theological backgrounds and nationalities in order to enhance the cooperation of the future leaders of the German church for the sake of the extension of the Kingdom of God. It is committed to holding together the splintering factions of the German church. ⁴⁰⁸

Partnership between MBS and Mission to the World (PCA) missionary team

In the year 2002 MBS and the PCA missionary team formed a cooperative partnership. Rev. Ken Matlack, team leader of the PCA team, is the academic dean of the

⁴⁰⁷ Team Berlin, "Martin Bucer Seminary," Team Berlin, http://www.teamberlin.org/bucer.html (accessed December 19, 2007). The director and founder of MBS, Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher, writes: "German seminaries are becoming increasingly irrelevant to ministry. They either emphasize 'practical theology' at the expense of important subjects like ethics, church history, sects, the original languages, etc. or they give academic degrees with little emphasis on character development, and provide little contact with experienced pastors or missionaries. MBS seeks to provide the best of both."

⁴⁰⁸ Team Berlin, "Who was Martin Bucer," Team Berlin, http://www.teamberlin.org/bucer_who.htm (accessed December 19, 2007).

Berlin study center. Both MBS and the PCA team have a vision for church planting, missions and theological teaching and training.

What makes Martin-Bucer Seminary unique? 409

Innovative and flexible – MBS allows students to create a course of study that equips them specifically for their ministry, rather than forcing the student to "fit a system." It is one of the few theological institutions that recognizes work done at other theological institutions. MBS also caters to those who can only study part-time.

Culturally relevant – MBS does not see the world as an enemy, rather as a part of God's creation that is to be reconciled with Him. Therefore we aim to take every thought captive (II Cor. 10:5) and to test our thinking and actions as to how they address and transform the surrounding culture.

Multicultural and international – Christianity is not limited by national borders. Consequently MBS is intentionally open to learn from Christians from other cultures. We welcome teachers and students from all over the world to give our students a global perspective of God's kingdom.

Missions oriented – Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher, the director and founder of MBS writes, "MBS's goal is that all aspects of theological education are directed towards church planting and world missions. Missions is at the center of the curriculum."

Theologically grounded in the Word of God – Paul's missions mandate is spelled out in greatest detail in the book of Romans. MBS sees good thorough biblical doctrine as the motor which drives us to evangelize.

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⁴⁰⁹ Team Berlin, "What makes Martin Bucer Seminary unique?," Team Berlin, http://www.teamberlin.org/bucer_unique.htm (accessed December 19, 2007).

Faithful to the Word of God – Germany is the beachhead for liberalism in Europe. The undermining of the authority of Scripture still riddles the church and its seminaries. MBS is one of the few seminaries which hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God.

Proposal for Leadership/Church Planting Track

Mission

This program exists to assist in saturating the former GDR with the Gospel of Christ by training, mentoring and sending forth called (calling), Christ-like (character), and well-trained (competence) individuals who will plant churches into the youth culture (community) with the intent of developing those into biblically-based, multi-generational churches.

Vision

The spiritual need in the former GDR is great. Statistics bear out the experience of many church planters/missionaries that this region is largely atheistic, thoroughly secular and confidently humanistic in its world view. The middle generation (thirty-five and over) are generally closed to the Gospel. Their training, their background and their schooling in atheistic/humanistic ideology was thorough and complete. With the younger generations, however, cracks in this ideological system are evident. Therefore, a particular emphasis should be made for the planting of youth churches (Christian communities) for the next ten to twenty years.

To accommodate this strategy, many young leaders are required to be trained and sent out with vision, character, calling and competence.

The emphasis is placed squarely on church planting into the youth culture as a strategy to reach the people of the former GDR for the Gospel of Christ.

Long Range Goals

- Create vision for the extension of God's Kingdom in the former GDR
- Saturation church planting
- Develop a network of youth churches in the former GDR
- Develop effective youth church plants
- Develop effective, visionary youth church planters

Practical Considerations

• Length of program: 2 years

Degree: Part of the overall program at MBS, like a major in a

university

program; not a separate degree program

• Curriculum: Center for the Development of Evangelical Leadership at

GCTS;

Arrow Program materials; own materials

• Internships: At existing youth church plant initiatives (e.g. Jugendkirche

Marzahn or Junge Kirche Berlin)

Mentoring: Will be provided as part of the educational process and

beyond

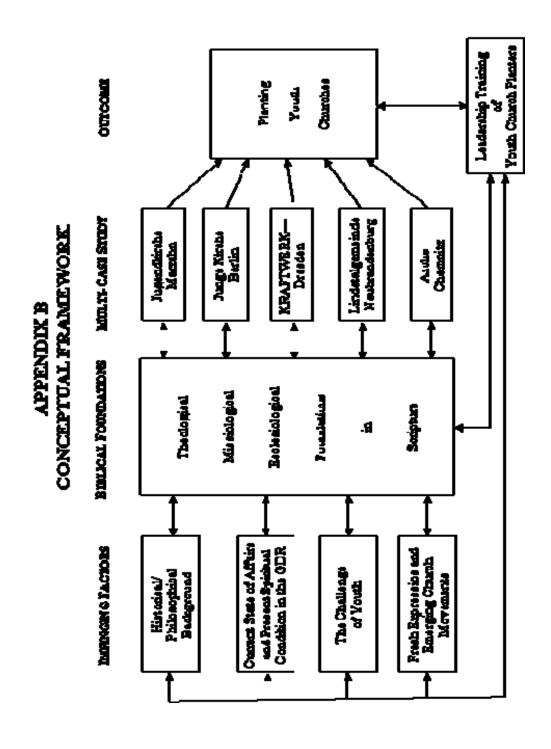
Various Study Topics in Leadership:

- ♦ Biblical Foundations for Leadership
- Biblical Paradigms for Christian Leadership
- ♦ Calling in Christian Leadership
- Character in Leadership (Character Formation)
- ♦ Biblical Case Studies (Ancient Israel, Early Church, Jesus, Esther, Peter)
- ♦ Contemporary Case Studies
- ♦ Shepherd Imagery

- ◆ Women in the Church: Perspectives from Christian History, Theology and the Bible
- ♦ Culture and Leadership
- ♦ Competence development
- ♦ Personal Leadership Assessment

Various Study Topics in Church Planting:

- ♦ Ecclesiology
- ♦ Understanding the unique East German context (culture and Gospel)
- Development of a church planting team
- ◆ Development of written documents (mission, vision, strategy, goals, by-laws, values)
- ♦ Structure of church
- ♦ Leading of a small group (cell)
- ♦ Training in evangelism
- ♦ Preaching/Teaching



APPENDIX C:

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

A. Overview of the Case Study Project

The multi-case study design was chosen for this exploratory project. It is usually employed where considerable uncertainty exists about the phenomenon under investigation and no clear outcome can be ascertained, utilizing the multiple-case, holistic design with the literal replication logic.

In this approach five different youth churches in the East German context which have been intentionally designed and planted were the focus for the qualitative research of this paper with the intent of ascertaining the effectiveness of planting youth churches in the atheistic and secular environment of the former GDR as a strategy for church planting and evangelism.

As this study is based on the teachings of the Scriptures a large portion of this paper is dedicated to investigating the theological and missiological soundness of the youth church concept.

B. Field Procedures

In-depth, unstructured interviews of several youth church planters (both over the phone and in person) captured some of the thoughts on religious life of the people of the former GDR, on Christian faith and the process of church planting in this environment.

Interviews of a few other individuals who lived and ministered under the former GDR regime supplements the information gathered through literature research. The source of data collection was not limited to the interview. Field visits were made to two of the five youth churches creating the opportunity for direct observation. In addition,

documentary information, such as printed materials, and website information was gathered.

C. Case Study Questions

Interview Questions

II.	General Information
	1. Name of youth church:

- 2. Address of youth church:
- 3. Pastor, Leader or director of ministry:
- 4. Denominational affiliation:

III. History

- 1. Founding year:
- 2. How did this church plant start?

IV. Vision/Strategy/Values /Dreams

- 1. What is your mission and vision?
- 2. What are your values?
- 3. What is your strategy?
- 4. What are your goals?

5.	What are the emphases of your programming?
6.	How do you develop contacts?
7.	What are the factors which lead a young person to a clear decision for Christ?
8.	Describe the process by which a non-believer develops into a dedicated follower of Christ.
9.	How do you assist them in further growth?
10). What does your discipleship program look like?
V.	Church Leadership Structure and development
	1. How is your church leadership structured?
,	2. What does your leadership training (mentoring) look like?
	3. Who is responsible for it?
4	4. What resources do you use?
;	5. What were the 3 greatest challenges for you in the area of leadership development in Hellersdorf, in East Berlin?

	6. Does this differ from your experiences in other parts of the former DDR?
VI.	Theology/Ecclesiology
	1. What are the theological difficulties and challenges with the concept of youth church (or church within the youth culture)?
	2. What are the ecclesiological questions that arise?
	3. Do you see the youth church movement as a temporary solution or is this a lasting alternative?
	4. Will the youth churches concept survive/endure?
	5. Do you view the youth church concept as a missiological strategy (esp. in East Germany)?
	6. Are you aware of other youth church planting initiatives? How many are there and where are they? In the East?
	7. What is the structure of the youth church?
	8. Describe your inter-denominational cooperation?
VII	Contactualization

VII. Contextualization

1. Contextualization: Dr. Schröder in her doctoral dissertation about church planting in the former states of the GDR concluded that most initiatives struggled and some failed. Her conclusion is that more time and investment needs to be made in this area of contextualization. To be able to correctly

understand an East German citizen and to be able to give him the Good News in his own cultural language is the most important task. Page 252 – "There is too little reflection on the issue of confessionlessness (unchurched) on the part of the free churches and its church planting initiatives." "...to deal more intensely with this phenomenon of east German secularization, confessionlessness and religious indifference" – Page 256. "...that no thought was given to be culturally relevant." – Page 239. "...the problem of little effort in dealing with confessionlessness and the mentality of the East German, a dealing that is essential in reaching the numerous people without a confession." – Page 217. Given this background, can a non-east German effectively plant a church or lead a church planting effort in the former GDR?

- 2. How can the missions arm of foreign organizations encourage and mobilize church planting efforts?
- 3. What would be the most effective way in which foreign missionaries can invest themselves in church planting efforts?
- 4. What would be your wish in this area of cooperation?
- 5. How can foreign church planters partner effectively with indigenous church planting efforts?

VIII. Statistics

- 1. Church attendance:
- 2. Church members:
- 3. Number of new converts:
- 4. Number of baptisms:
- 5. Number of small groups:

IX. Additional Information:

1. What surprised you?

2.	What was or is unexpected and what was or is inexplicable?
3.	Tell me a few interesting stories in your ministry – which stories encourage you and touch your heart?
4.	What is the Holy Spirit doing at the moment?
5.	Where do you see the hand of God in operation?
6.	What has encouraged you and what has discouraged you?
7.	What is your great vision? Hope?
8.	What are your realistic expectations?
9.	What were your 3 greatest challenges in church planting in Hellersdorf in the eastern part of Berlin?
10	. How are these different from your experiences in Sonneberg or in other parts of the former DDR?
11	. What were your 3 greatest encouragements or joys in this church planting effort?
12	. Would you do it again?

- 13. What would you do differently?
- 14. In which battles do you have to engage? (Ecclesiological, theological, cultural, socially, spiritually, in the area of leadership and community, etc.?)

D. Guide for the Case Study Report

Once the information and data had been gathered, it was evaluated and written up in a case study report. A within-case study analysis was followed by a cross-case analysis from which several conclusions were drawn. A cross-case analysis chart was drawn up for a quicker overview of the practical principles operative in the various youth churches. These are found in chapter 5 of the dissertation project submitted to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

APPENDIX D:

MULTI-CASE STUDY ELEMENTS

Summary and Analysis

APPENDIX E:

TIMELINE: EAST GERMANY AND BERLIN WALL

Source: Berlin Wall online. "Berlin Wall Timeline." Berlin Wall Online. http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/history/berlinwall-timeline.htm (accessed December 14, 2007).

May 8, 1945	World War II is over and Berlin is divided into 4 sectors: the American, British, French in the West and the Soviet in the East
June 24, 1948	Begin of the Berlin blockade
June 25, 1948	Berlin Airlift begins
May 12, 1949	End of Berlin blockade
May 24, 1949	Federal Republic of Germany is founded (West Germany)
September 30, 1949	End of Berlin Airlift
October 7, 1949	German Democratic Republic is founded (East Germany)
May 26, 1952	Border between East and West Germany and between East Germany and West Berlin is closed. Only the border between East and West Berlin is still open
June 17, 1953	Uprising of East Berlin building workers against the imposition of increased working norms, suppression by Red Army tanks
December 11, 1957	Leaving East Germany without permission is forbidden and violations are prosecuted with prison up to three years
August 13, 1961	The Berlin sectorial border between East and West Berlin is closed, barriers are built. The building of the Berlin Wall
August 14, 1961	Brandenburg Gate is closed
August 26, 1961	All crossing points are closed for West Berlin citizens
June 26, 1963	President J.F. Kennedy visits Berlin and says: "Ich bin ein Berliner." ("I am a Berliner.")
December 17, 1963	West Berliner citizen may visit East Berlin the first time after more than two years
September 3, 1971	Four Power's Agreement over Berlin visiting becomes easier for West Berliners
June 12, 1987	President Ronald Reagan visits Berlin and urges Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.
September 10, 1989	Hungarian government opens border for East German refugees
November 9, 1989	Berlin Wall is opened
December 22, 1989	Brandenburg Gate is opened
October 3, 1990	Germany is reunited

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APPENDIX F:

TIMELINE: GERMANY

Source: BBC News, "Timeline: Germany. A Chronology of Events." BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Europe/country_profiles/1053880.stm (accessed December 14, 2007).

A chronology of key events:

- **800** Emperor Charlemagne, Frankish ruler of France and Germany, crowned Roman emperor by Pope Leo III
- **962** German King Otto I crowned Roman emperor after gaining control of northern Italy; beginning of what became known as Holy Roman Empire centred on Germany
- **1438** Election of Albert I marks beginning of Habsburg dynasty based in Austria
- **1517** Martin Luther proclaims Ninety-Nine Theses against traditional church practices; start of Protestant split from Catholic Church



Berlin's Brandenburg Gate once stood in no-man's land

Early modern Germany

- **1618-1648** Thirty-Years' War: failure of Habsburg emperors' attempt to restore Catholic dominance and imperial authority against opposition of Protestant princes; 1648 Treaty of Westphalia confirms near total independence of territorial states.
- **1806** Napoleon's armies impose French rule over much of Germany; Francis II declares abolition of Holy Roman Empire and adopts title of emperor of Austria
- **1813** Defeat of Napoleon at Battle of Leipzig
- **1848** Year of Revolutions; failure of liberals' attempt to unite Germany under democratic constitution; start of period of rapid industrialisation
- **1871** Otto von Bismarck achieves unification of Germany under leadership of Prussia; new German Empire's authoritarian constitution creates elected national parliament (Reichstag) but gives Kaiser (emperor) extensive powers
- 1914-1918 World War I
- **1918** Germany defeated, signs armistice.
- **1919** Treaty of Versailles: Germany loses colonies and land to neighbours, pays large-scale reparations.

Beginning of the Weimar Republic, based on a new constitution. Its early years are marked by high unemployment and rampant inflation.

- 1924 Hitler writes Mein Kampf "My Struggle" in prison.
- **1929** Global depression, mass unemployment.

Third Reich

- **1933** Hitler becomes chancellor. Weimar Republic gives way to a one-party state. Systematic persecution of Germany's Jews escalates. Hitler proclaims the Third Reich in 1934.
- 1935 Germany begins to re-arm. Nuremberg Laws deprive German Jews of citizenship.
- **1936** Berlin Olympics.
- 1938 Annexation of Austria and Sudetenland.

Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) sees orchestrated attacks on Jews and their property as well as synagogues.

1939-1945 - Invasion of Poland triggers World War II.

Millions of people of all ages, mostly Jews but also large numbers of Gypsies, Slavs and other races, the disabled and homosexuals, die in the Holocaust as the Nazis implement an extermination policy in the death camps of eastern Europe.

- **1945** German army defeated. Allies divide Germany into occupation zones.
- **1945-1946** Nuremberg war crimes trials.

Divided country

1949 - Germany is divided. The US, French and British zones in the west become the Federal Republic of Germany; the Soviet zone in the east becomes the communist German Democratic Republic.

Konrad Adenauer, of the Christian Democrats (CDU) is West Germany's first chancellor. East Germany is led by Walter Ulbricht.

- **1950s** Start of rapid economic growth in West Germany.
- **1955** West Germany joins Nato; East Germany joins the Warsaw Pact.
- **1957** West Germany joins the European Economic Community.
- **1961** Construction of the Berlin Wall.
- **1968** East German constitution declares unification impossible until the West becomes socialist.

1971 - Walter Ulbricht is succeeded in East by Erich Honecker.

1973 - East and West Germany join the UN.

Wall tumbles

1987 - East German leader Erich Honecker pays a first official visit to West.

1989 - Mass exodus of East Germans as Soviet bloc countries relax travel restrictions.



Fall of the Berlin Wall was a prelude to reunification

Berlin Wall is torn down.

1990 - Kohl leads a reunified Germany.

1991 - Parliament names Berlin the new capital.

1992 - Erich Honecker is brought back to Berlin from Moscow to face political charges.

1994 - Honecker dies. Kohl re-elected.

Russian and Allied troops finally leave Berlin.

2001 March - European Court of Human Rights rules that three former East German Communist leaders should serve jail terms for sanctioning a policy of shooting would-be escapees at the Berlin Wall. The Court said that the men - among them the last East German leader Egon Krenz - had violated international human rights law.

2002 January - Euro (€) replaces the Deutsche Mark (DM) as the national currency

2005 November - Angela Merkel of the CDU becomes chancellor in a "grand coalition" involving the CDU, CSU and SPD.

2006 November - Unemployment falls below 4 million for the first time in four years.

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